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THE STORY OF EVANGELINE









"LONG AT HER FATHER'S DOOR EVANGELINE STOOD"—Page 179

# THE STORY OF EVANGELINE

ADAPTED FROM  
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BY  
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WITH THE ORIGINAL POEM

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## FOREWORD

The purpose of this narrative is threefold,—to give a direct prose rendering of Longfellow's poem, "Evangeline," to awaken interest in the poem itself, and to preserve, so far as possible, the spirit of the original poetry for those who prefer their romances in prose. The text follows the poem closely and uses many of Longfellow's own words and phrases as being eminently the best fitted to the scenes that are described. In the brief historical and legendary introduction the writer is largely indebted to Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton's "The History of Kings County," and to "Acadian Legends and Lyrics" by the same author. For Longfellow's biography the following books have also been consulted: "The Life of Longfellow" by Erin S. Robertson, "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow" by Thomas Wadsworth Higginson, and "Henry Wadsworth Longfellow" by Samuel Longfellow.





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## INTRODUCTION

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in the city of Portland, February 27, 1807. His father, Stephen Longfellow, was a lawyer who held a prominent place in the New England of his day and was greatly respected, both for his ability and his character. Stephen Longfellow had taken honors at Harvard college and was considered a man of extraordinary fineness of nature both by his professors and his classmates; he came swiftly to the front in the profession of law and was prominent at the Cumberland bar. In politics he belonged to the Federalist party and went to the legislature as representative in 1814. He was also a member of the National Congress a year later.

There was little about the admirable figure of this old-fashioned New England gentleman, however, to make it seem probable that any of his son's poetic qualities were inherited from him. The poet undoubtedly owed to his father the composure of character and manliness of principle that have made his name, with those of Whitman and Browning, stand forward so sturdily

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among the names of poets of the Nineteenth Century, but the gifts that won his popularity and fame must have come to him from the nature of his mother, who delighted in music and showed a keen appreciation of poetry. An invalid in her later years, she was active as well as beautiful in her youth, fond of dancing and of the society of her friends and possessed of a great love of nature—able, as Samuel Longfellow says of her, “to sit by a window during a thunderstorm enjoying the excitement of its splendors.”

Zilpah Longfellow was a daughter of General Peleg Wadsworth and Elizabeth Bartlett, coming from a family of Americans who were famous for patriotic service. Her brother, Henry Wadsworth, a young naval lieutenant, perished in 1804 when the fire ship *Intrepid* was blown up before Tripoli on the night of September fourth, and her father commanded a company of minute men and saw active service in the Revolution.

Longfellow was the second son. As a boy he is described as decidedly attractive in character and appearance, fond of all outdoor sports—except that of shooting, to which his elder brother Stephen was devoted—sensitive, dreamy, quick to anger but affectionate, and with a

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strong and an unusual dislike of all loud noises, a trait that followed him through life. When he was three years old his parents began to live in the house on Congress Street that has since been associated with the scenes of his youth and childhood. It was built by his grandfather, General Wadsworth, and was celebrated as being the first brick house in Portland. The poet's mother had spent her girlhood and celebrated her wedding there and she returned to the old house to make her permanent home soon after her marriage.

From his earliest years Longfellow had the use of his father's excellent library and has left in his own words a record of the books that fascinated him most. Washington Irving's "Sketch Book" was read by him "with an ever increasing wonder and delight," and in his address before the Massachusetts Historical Society on the occasion of Irving's death he declared that the old fascination had always remained for him.

After some desultory schooling which began at what would seem to-day the preposterous age of three years, Longfellow was sent to the Portland Academy, where as a little boy he excited remark on the part of his teachers for the same industry and good habits that later grad-

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uated him from Bowdoin almost at the head of one of the largest classes that up to that time had entered the young college. Idling was never encouraged in the Longfellow household, where the father governed his family with kindly firmness, teaching them, as is recorded, "habits of industry, personal honor and an abiding fear of debt."

Samuel Longfellow and other of Longfellow's biographers have told at some length of his first printed production which appeared in the poet's corner of the *Portland Gazette* when he had barely passed his thirteenth birthday. It was entitled "The Battle of Lovell's Pond," and while it bears the marks of immaturity and is hardly remarkable when compared with the work that some other poets had produced at the same early age, it is, in a certain way characteristic of much of his later work. Lovell's Pond in the neighborhood of Portland was once the scene of an Indian fight whose details excited Longfellow's awakening imagination. The poem resulted and was duly printed in the *Gazette* under the signature of "Henry," exciting no comment whatever from the young poet's parents who were doubtless unaware of its authorship. Longfellow had kept his effort a secret that only his little sister shared, but on the



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evening of the day that the poem was published he visited the house of his father's friend, Judge Mellen, whose son, Frederick, was one of his own early companions. The talk in the sitting-room chanced, unfortunately for Longfellow, to include poetry, for the Judge said: "Did you see the piece in to-day's paper? Very stiff, remarkably stiff; moreover it is all borrowed, every word of it."

The cruel disappointment at this reception of his earliest flight did not, however, prevent "Henry" from repeating his performance and publishing other poems, all more or less crude, over the same signature. Gradually the secret of their authorship leaked out among his friends. His mother encouraged him in his "poetic effusions" as she called his writings and Portland became the scene of a schoolboy literary union that included four or five other lads besides Longfellow. In the meanwhile he attended strictly to his studies and was ready for college when fourteen years old, passing his entrance examinations for Bowdoin in 1821.

Stephen Longfellow, was one of the trustees of that little college that has since then had upon its honor roll such names as Longfellow, Hawthorne and Peary; and it was characteristic of him that he decided to send both

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his sons to the young and struggling institution, feeling himself in duty bound to do so. Longfellow entered college in the same year with his elder brother, Stephen, making the acquaintance of Nathaniel Hawthorne who chanced to be in his class. In their college years, however, the two never became the closest of friends, although they were fond of taking walks together in the Brunswick woods and of reading and conversing on literary subjects.

Longfellow studied hard at Bowdoin and wrote constantly. Although the quality of most of his earliest poems was far from being remarkable, they showed sufficient flashes of inspiration to awaken in his own mind a passionate desire to direct his life work in the field of literature. Bryant was becoming famous then, and a paper known as the *United States Literary Gazette* had the unique distinction of printing, often on the same page, the early poems of Bryant and Longfellow, while it was claimed that the quality of this verse with that of other contemporaries was of a higher order than the work of any previous American poets. "With Bryant and Longfellow it would therefore seem that the permanent poetic literature of the nation began," says Higginson—a small

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beginning, certainly when considered with the work that was being done on the other side of the Atlantic at that time, where the poems of Keats, Shelley, Byron and Wordsworth were ringing!

Bryant's poetry in those early days was considered far superior to that of his younger rival and Longfellow has admitted that much of his verse was involuntarily borrowed from Bryant's, for which he had the highest admiration. He discarded the major part of it in his later life with the apology, that all had been written before he was nineteen years old. Seventeen pieces were contributed by Longfellow to the *Gazette* during his college course and only five of them were considered by him to be sufficiently good for subsequent publication.

His future career commenced to become a problem to him, occupying his mind to a marked degree during the year of his graduation, and he wrote frequently to his father asking advice. He confessed himself averse to taking up any profession and expressed the desire to spend a year abroad at Cambridge to study the polite languages. He declared that of all the things in the world he had a strong desire to win distinction in literature, and that in the field of letters alone did he believe that he could be

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successful. That Longfellow's father did not have great confidence in his son's literary gifts is decidedly apparent in the tone of his answering letters. He said among other things that America did not then possess wealth enough to encourage purely literary men; that while the life of an author must be very pleasant, it required sufficient means to dissolve the thought of the necessity of self-support and that as he had never lived with the intention of amassing wealth for his children but rather to cultivate their minds in the best possible manner, his own income did not allow his son's taking such a course. He would be glad, however, he added, to bear the expenses of the trip abroad, which he had always believed might be beneficial to his son.

While the young poet was thus wrestling with his first real problem, the event occurred which it is generally conceded forced the trend of his genius and directed the course of his entire life—perhaps was even responsible for his having continued in literature, although this seems hardly probable. In college his ability as a scholar had attracted such attention at Bowdoin that although he was only nineteen years old when he graduated the trustees promptly chose him to fill a new position made by the

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establishment of a chair of modern languages through a gift by Mrs. Bowdoin. This entailed a year's study abroad to gain a mastery of modern languages and it is needless to say that Longfellow was delighted with the marvelous opportunity which fell in so happily with his own wishes. He accepted it at once—but with the demand that he be made a professor instead of filling the position of instructor as was expected of him. The point was acceded by the trustees and Longfellow sailed for France.

Europe in those days had about it a glamour for Americans that was enhanced in Longfellow's eyes through the stimulus to his active imagination in the studying of different peoples and customs and the visiting of historic and romantic places. His letters home bear ample witness to the effect of his first travels. He was faithful to the purpose with which he had gone abroad, however, and in the time allowed him gained a knowledge of French, German, Spanish and Italian. He had well fulfilled his mission when he returned to take up his duties at Bowdoin, where so short a time before he had been a student.

Longfellow's life as a professor of languages in the little rural college was uneventful, but he soon became



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known not only in Brunswick but generally throughout the country for his capability as a teacher. He applied himself to his work with great devotion and earnestness, preparing text books and foreign classics for the benefit of his pupils and doing everything in his power to attain a stimulating influence over them.

In 1831 he married a Portland girl named Mary Storer Potter, a second daughter of Barrett Potter who was a neighbor and friend of Longfellow's own family. She had scholarly tastes and, what was perhaps more important in the wife of a young professor, was able successfully to administer her husband's household affairs on the slender income that the Bowdoin trustees considered an adequate salary. In addition to the sum of eight hundred dollars a year for his professional work Longfellow received an extra hundred for his duties as college librarian. His labors were by no means light, and he found the sum that he received meager enough to meet his growing expenses, while he was obliged to rise early each morning to perform his literary work. And even then there appeared to be nothing about this work to indicate the rise of a great poet. It consisted mostly of prose, a large part of which was sketches of his European experiences,

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written after the manner of Washington Irving. These sketches were published in the *New England Magazine* under the title of "The Schoolmaster." Many writers and biographers have commented on the fact that with the exception of his very earliest poems his first work was scant in verse production and that he seemed to show no particular talent or even inclination for poetry.

As a teacher, however, his ability was evident from the first. Three years after he had taken up his work in Bowdoin he had won a reputation of the first order that resulted in his receiving a letter from Josiah Quincy of Harvard College, informing him that Professor Ticknor had given notice of his coming resignation as Smith Professor of Modern Languages and asking Longfellow to take his place. The letter implied that a preliminary stay in Europe for further study would be advisable, and Longfellow promptly accepted both the hint and the position, preparing at once for a second foreign tour in which his wife was to accompany him. He sailed with her in the spring of 1835, going first to London, where he met Thomas Carlyle; thence after a brief stay to Sweden and from there to Holland.

In Holland there came to Longfellow the first real

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sorrow that he had ever experienced, for his young wife died in Amsterdam after an illness of several weeks. What this meant to him, alone and among strangers, can be imagined—especially as his married life had been the happiest conceivable. His letters, which strove to put on a brave front, had a note of the utmost despondency, but he remained abroad and went on with his work probably from a sense of duty to the college he was about to enter.

That winter he spent in Heidelberg, studying deeply and meeting several men that greatly interested him, among them the poet Bryant, who was hitherto unknown to him, although he had molded so much of Longfellow's early writing.

In 1836 Longfellow returned to America and took up his residence in Cambridge as a Harvard professor. He boarded in the old Craigie house which had been built almost a hundred years before and which was used as General Washington's headquarters during the siege of Boston in the Revolution. This old house was naturally famous in Cambridge and one of its most interesting landmarks even before it gained the added fame of being the residence of Longfellow. The house is said to have been built in 1759 by Colonel John Vassal and was taken by



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Washington as headquarters and residence. Later it was purchased by Andrew Craigie who had served as surgeon-general in the Continental army. He became an elaborate entertainer and is reported to have had among his guests no less personages than the famous Talleyrand and Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria's father. Mrs. Craigie still lived in the old house when Longfellow went to Cambridge and was exceedingly loath to take him as a lodger until she found out who he was. But when he declared himself the author of "Outre Mer," a book of European sketches then recently published, a copy of which was lying on her sideboard at the time of Longfellow's call upon her, the good lady promptly relented, showed him through the house and taking him into a pleasant chamber announced to him that it had been General Washington's once and that he could have it for his own.

Longfellow published his second book, the novel, "Hyperion," soon after he commenced his duties at Harvard. The previous book that had made such an impression upon his landlady had been running in magazine form before his second European tour. He was also publishing in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* a number of short

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poems among which was "The Psalm of Life," that at first appeared anonymously. It received wide attention throughout the country with so much speculation as to its authorship that Longfellow decided to republish it under his own name, bringing it out with a number of other verses in 1839 in a little book that he called "Voices of the Night," most of the poems in it being reprinted from the *Knickerbocker Magazine*.

"Hyperion" had appeared two or three months earlier and according to some biographers Longfellow has been criticized for the apparent lack of taste that he exhibited in it. The main purpose of the book, it has been claimed, was nothing else than the wooing of Miss Frances Elizabeth Appleton, a lady that Longfellow had met some years before in Switzerland. Certainly she is obviously the heroine, Mary Ashburton, while the author's own experiences and emotions are but thinly veiled under the romantic narrative.

The experiment did not fail, or rather Longfellow succeeded in spite of it. Four years later he married Frances Appleton, a remarkable and charming woman who was to become identified in a large measure with much of his later work, for the poet's second wife had es-

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entially the nature best fitted to aid her husband in his creative labors, and entered with all her heart into his literary life.

Before Longfellow's second marriage, however, and after the publication of "Hyperion," he produced some of his most distinctive and characteristic work. "The Skeleton in Armor," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "Excelsior," and the much discussed and somewhat severely criticized "Poems on Slavery," had all been published. These last cost Longfellow for a time a considerable part of his popularity, a loss that in no way affected his composure, although the poems were criticized not only on account of the issue with which they dealt but for reasons of poetic inferiority. Even those reformers who had largely induced Longfellow to employ his pen on this dynamic and highly explosive subject felt that his note was somewhat too slight for the magnitude of his theme, and compared his verse unfavorably with that of Whittier. It is known and mentioned, however, that Whittier himself wrote to Longfellow expressing his appreciation of the poems, declaring that they had rendered important service to the Liberty movement; and certainly the criticism that fell on Longfellow was shared and shared gen-

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erously by Whittier, Emerson and all others who were writing against slavery.

In 1843 Longfellow published "The Spanish Student," a dramatic poem of no particular merit that enjoyed almost equal popularity, however, with some of his better work that had preceded it. By this time his fame was national and well established, and he was beginning to make the peculiar and general appeal in the homes of Americans that has fallen to the lot of no other writer, either of verse or prose, while his strong tendency toward Americanism was becoming broader and deeper.

It seemed, indeed, at this time in Longfellow's career, as if Fortune could not do too much for her favorite, who throughout his life, with the exception of the one great tragedy of his later years, was destined to enjoy so large an amount of happiness. His second wife was not only a woman who in every way could awaken his inspiration, but she was possessed of a sufficient fortune so that the thought of poverty need never trouble him or his family. His position in the university and in the nation was even then assured. He was still young, and in spite of his academic duties had sufficient time at his command to de-

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velop his growing genius and to satisfy the poetic craving of his nature.

A scholarly work on the poets and the poetry of Europe, written jointly by Longfellow and Professor Felton was published in 1845. It was composed of several hundred translations of poems in various languages from Icelandic to Portuguese with critical commentaries and introductions and it showed Longfellow's tremendous versatility in and acquaintance with foreign tongues. In the same year there appeared notes in his diary showing that already he was considering the long, hexameter poem, "Evangeline." In 1846 he published "The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems," which included many of his popular favorites, among them "The Arrow and the Song."

Then came "Evangeline" on which he had been working for some time and which was destined to be the most popular of any of his poems. He had never been to Nova Scotia, or Acadia, to acquaint himself with the scenes of his new literary venture, but the description, on the whole, rings true in spite of minor inconsistencies.

Robertson tells us a curious story of "Evangeline's"



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inception—how Longfellow one day was dining at his home with Nathaniel Hawthorne and a clergyman who told the poet of a subject in which he was endeavoring without success to awaken Hawthorne's interest. He then related the history of a young Acadian girl who had been driven into exile with all the rest of her people during the expulsion of the Acadians in 1755; how she became separated from her lover and wandered for many years in search of him until she found him in a hospital at the point of death. "That Longfellow at once took the lovely legend," writes Robertson, "is not so striking a fact, as that Hawthorne, true to the strange taste of his 'miasmatic conscience' felt the want of a sin to study in the story and so would have none of it."

The success of "Evangeline" was rapid and so universal that thirty-seven thousand copies were sold in the first ten years. The effect of the poem upon Nova Scotia and French Canada is still evident. It is said that the French Canadians hold Longfellow higher than any other poet and that many of them have learned English just for the pleasure of reading *Evangeline* in the original. *Evangeline* herself has been portrayed upon the pamphlets and time-tables of Canadian railroads that

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have been prompt to see the advertising possibilities in the poem. The poem itself has been translated into ten foreign languages, and to-day it is still read widely.

“Kavanagh” followed “Evangeline”—a novel for which Americans seem to have little inclination, and after its publication there was a lull in Longfellow’s literary output. But “The Seaside and the Fireside” was published in Boston in 1850 and “The Golden Legend” in 1851. Then, in 1855, appeared what to many people will always stand as the high-water mark of Longfellow’s genius, “The Song of Hiawatha” in which the spirit and traditions of the Indians were so thoroughly portrayed, with such fresh and delightful simplicity, that it stands high and alone as the poetic expression of the Indian legend.

For some time past Longfellow had been working on this Indian adventure and from the entries regarding it that we read in quotations from his journal we can see that it fascinated and delighted him. Finally it was put on press in a first edition of 5000 copies and the response was immediate and enthusiastic on the part of the reading public. Violent controversies arose among the critics but on the whole their judgment was favorable. Emerson

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read the poem with interest and sent to Longfellow a letter of tempered praise. Bayard Taylor wrote in the same manner, though on the whole more warmly. Hawthorne and Parsons joined in commending it and letters of appreciation and criticism poured on the poet who had apparently awakened the entire nation through the original application of his verse.

By this time Longfellow had resigned his professorship in order to be entirely free for literary effort. Even if he had not been comparatively wealthy he would then have been in a position to earn a comfortable income from his writing. He was paying the pleasant penalty of his fame in the host of visitors and the curious that besieged him constantly and in the ceaseless incoming tide of letters from all over the country, many of which he tried to answer in his own hand. But although he had given himself completely to writing it was three years after "Hiawatha" had taken the country by storm before "The Courtship of Miles Standish" was published and five years later before "Tales of a Wayside Inn" was given to the press.

In those five years, however, there had come to Longfellow a sudden and hideous tragedy. Early in July,





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1861, Mrs. Longfellow, while with her children in the library of Craigie House, was burned to death from the accidental falling of a match and Longfellow himself received severe burns in his efforts to rescue her. The horror and pity of this event were indescribable and for a long time afterward Longfellow could not speak of the anguish that he had experienced. He never completely recovered from the shock and though in time he resumed his writing, it seemed as if his greatest work had been completed.

"Flower de Luce," "The New England Tragedies" and a translation of Dante's "Divine Comedy" appeared successively in the years from 1867 to 1870 and "Christus, a Mystery" followed them two years later in an effort to consummate what Longfellow believed to be "a higher strain" of poetry. The different parts of this poem had already been published, "The Divine Tragedy," "The Golden Legend" and "The New England Tragedies" forming the whole.

From this time on new tributes were constantly given to Longfellow. In 1868 he visited Europe again and was presented to Queen Victoria and to a large number of England's greatest men. Degrees and honors were con-

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ferred on him by foreign universities. He was accorded respect and admiration wherever he went. From the time of his return to America, his life was quiet and even until the day of his death. "Aftermath," "The Masque of Pandora and Other Poems," "Poems of Places," "Keramos," "Ultima Thule," "In the Harbor" and "Michael Angelo" were the new and collected issues of his writings. He died in 1882 and two years later his bust was placed in the poets' corner of Westminster Abbey, an honor that had been conferred upon no other American poet.

. . . . .

The land of Acadia, that is now called Nova Scotia, is the scene of many stories and events in history that have made it a fitting place to have become the background of a narrative so romantic as that of the Acadian exile and of the lifelong separation of Evangeline from her lover, Gabriel; for the earliest tale that deals with this country is nearly a thousand years old, dating back hundreds of years before Columbus to the time when the savage and adventurous Norsemen sailed in open boats into unknown seas and came to a land that they called Markland, lying far in the western ocean. This land is



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believed to have been discovered by a Viking captain named Leif Ericsson, who sailed into the west from the shores of Greenland coming at last to a strange and marvelous country that seems to have been no other than Acadia itself; but for nearly five hundred years afterward no white man is known to have visited its shores to confirm the tales of Ericsson and his comrades concerning it.

In that time, however, and perhaps for thousands of years before, Acadia was the home of a tribe of Indians called Micmacs, who came and went across the Basin of Minas in their birch canoes and who hunted moose and beaver in the Acadian forests. Like the white settlers that followed them, the Micmacs appear to have been under the spell of the country where they lived and to have believed in many legends concerning it. Some of these legends claim that they were created by the sun itself, and it is certain that they worshiped the sun as their chief god and life giver; but other stories tell how they were made in human form by their hero-god, the mighty Glooscap, who shaped them from the ash-tree and who also turned his uncle, the turtle, into a man, finding him a wife from the tribe that he had just created. The Mic-

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macs believed too in a demon called Mendon who exercised his baleful powers upon them in many ways and whom they tried to appease by prayers and sacrifices whenever evil came upon them, although Glooscap, their chief hero, was supposed to watch over them and protect them from all harm.

Glooscap was loved by the Micmacs above all other gods and spirits and they claim to have beheld him in visible form striding far and wide throughout the country of Acadia. His favorite dwelling place was on the crest of the lofty cape, Blomidon, not far from the spot where the Acadians built their village—a cape that is almost a mountain, where he would sit for days at a time to watch over his people. He gave to them the beaver and the moose, the wolf and fox, and bear and marten—all the animals that ran in the forest, and he conquered many of the formidable monsters that inhabited the country when he came there. With his bow and arrows he slew the terrible giant, Chenoo, of whom every living creature had been afraid, and he captured and bound the great Wind-Bird, the Wuchowsen. Glooscap fought and vanquished the numerous giant sorcerers that had troubled the land of Acadia for centuries, and he

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turned into rattlesnakes certain hostile Indians that strove to oppose his will. In sport he created the elves and fairies that lived in the brooks and thickets of the wilderness, and one of his favorite pleasures was to force the whales of the ocean to do his bidding, for he would leap upon their backs and ride far into the open sea, compelling them to obey his will and carry him where he chose as though they had been trained to a bit and bridle all their lives. Every bird and beast of the land became his slave to do with as he chose, and the water-fowl, the loon, whose weird laughter can still be heard upon the Acadian lakes and rivers, became the messenger of Glooscap and flew with gladness on his errands.

Before this mighty god had come to the Acadian land, the beavers were gigantic beasts, greater in size even than the whales that he rode out to sea, for they had built a dam straight across the bay that is now called the Basin of Minas, which had become a salt water lake of vast extent with no connection with the outer ocean. Glooscap was so powerful that he broke the dam with a wave of the wand he carried, allowing the huge tides of the Bay of Fundy to rush upon the shores and to overflow the streams and rivers until their waters flooded the

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surrounding country as they have continued to do to this day in certain places, while in others the white settlers have been forced to build dykes to protect their meadows against the inroads of the sea. After he had destroyed the labor of the beavers, Glooscap beheld one of their number that sought to hide, and to frighten the beast still further he threw several handfuls of earth in its direction. His strength was so great, and the volume of earth that he lifted was so vast, that when it fell it became five islands that have remained in the Bay of Fundy ever since.

Many other wonders were believed by the Micmacs to have been performed by the mighty Glooscap, but before the French settlers came to their country he deserted his people and sought a new home in the west where he built his wigwam beyond the setting sun and made vast quantities of arrows for the Indians to use in a future and glorious battle against their enemies. Before he went away from them, however, he held a great feast on the seashore to which all the birds of the air and the animals of the forest were invited. All these animals up to the time of that feast had possessed the gift of speech and one and all they came at the bidding of Glooscap to feast with him until late in the night. All the wolves and



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foxes, moose and beavers, martens and turtles, white owls and loons—all the animals that ever lived in the land of Acadia were present, and they conversed with Glooscap and each other just as human beings would do to-day. But there was little merriment at the feast, for they knew that their master was going away from them, and they ate and drank together sadly until the late moon rose and cast a beam of silver light on the high Cape Blomidon, where Glooscap had made his home. Then he rose and left the feast, passing swiftly through the forest to the place where his great canoe was drawn high on the shore. He bade the tide to return to the ocean and as it did so launched his canoe upon the waters and sailed away, singing a song of the utmost sadness that was heard by all the animals that he had left behind him at the feast. As they heard his song they suddenly lost the gift of speech and were unable to live in friendship with each other any longer, so they rose from the place where they had been feasting and fled into the wilderness. The loons that Glooscap had loved and that had been his messengers, cried sadly on the lakes and rivers and the great white owl in the depths of the forest mourned and wailed for its lost master. The Indians too knew that Gloos-

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cap's reign was over and were grieved at his departure, but they believe that he will return to them and occupy once more his ancient home on Blomidon. Some of them once said that they had found the wigwam of their hero in the land beyond the setting sun after searching for seven years and that they themselves had from his own lips heard his faithful promise to return to his own people. But the top of Blomidon is still deserted and what are left of the Micmac Indians still await the home-coming of Glooscap.

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The first explorer who actually set foot on Acadian soil was the great pioneer, Champlain, who had served in Brittany in the army of King Henry the Fourth of France and who sailed up the Saint Lawrence river in 1603. The next year he returned and with two other pioneers named DeMonts and de Poitrincourt, sailed into the Bay of Fundy to explore its upper portion, disembarking at a place called "Mines," because a quantity of amethysts were found there in the sands. DeMonts and de Poitrincourt were aided by Champlain in founding the town of Port Royal, and afterward he journeyed onward to establish the first white settlement at Quebec and to dis-

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cover the great lake that bears his name. The little town that his fellow-explorers labored to establish lived only for six years, and in 1613 the English colonists made a descent upon the French settlers in Acadia, claiming that the country belonged to them by right of the discoveries of John Cabot, who had sailed along the Acadian coast seven years after Columbus had discovered the West Indies. In this raid the greater number of the earliest Acadians were driven from their homes and the town of Port Royal was left deserted.

No other white explorers tried to form a colony in Acadia until 1621, when an English nobleman named Sir William Alexander obtained a grant for the entire country from King James the First of England, who commanded that the country be called thereafter Nova Scotia instead of Acadia which was the name that had been given it by the French. Soon after, however, a treaty between France and England gave the country back to its former owners, and French settlers were again established there, but fierce feuds broke out among them and in 1654 a force sent out by Oliver Cromwell took possession once more in the name of the English. This time the English kept the land for thirteen years when it was again restored to

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France by the treaty of Breda. In spite of this, however, there were continual small wars between the English and French settlers, and in 1704 the English, under Colonel Benjamin Church, who was a famous Rhode Island Indian fighter, visited Port Royal and Minas Basin to punish the inhabitants. This English commander, who had fought the French before, was known to be utterly without pity or forbearance, and the Acadians were made to regret his visit keenly, for the English cut the dykes that they had built to protect their meadows against the Fundy tides and burned their barns and dwellings, killing several of their number and slaughtering whatever sheep and cattle they could lay their hands on.

Six years later the final conquest of the country was effected by the English, who sailed up the Basin of Minas with a fleet of six warships and twenty-nine transports commanded by General Francis Nicholson. Port Royal was captured and the French were obliged to consent to a treaty by which they renounced all further rights to the country that Champlain had discovered. Nor did they know what treatment to expect from the hands of their conquerors before the treaty was drawn up, providing

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that they might keep their farms and homesteads and enjoy their religion unmolested on the sole condition that they should become loyal British subjects.

In spite of the mastery by the English, however, and the acknowledged submission of the Acadian French, a great deal of bitter feeling still was manifest among the rival settlers and some fighting took place between them. The English believed that the French were inciting the Indians against them and were angry because the Indians held traffic with the French garrison of Louisburg in Cape Breton Island, sending them the produce of their farms. War continued between France and England and Louisburg was finally captured by Sir William Pepperell in 1745. This was one of the strongest fortresses that the French possessed in America, and desperate at its loss they dispatched a fleet from France to recapture it and to take the whole of Acadia as well. The English became afraid that they could not hold the land against the force that was being sent against them, and Lieutenant Governor Mascarene appealed for aid to Governor Shirley of Massachusetts, who sent five hundred volunteers to aid the small number of English troops that were already in Acadia. The command of these volun-



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teers was given to Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Noble, who had been one of the English officers that distinguished themselves at the capture of Louisburg.

Noble's company of volunteers set sail from New England in 1747 and landed at Port Royal late in the autumn of that year. They marched from there to the village of Grand-Pré from which Evangeline and her countrymen were driven into exile a few years later, and finding it too late in the year to build a blockhouse, quartered at Minas in twenty-four private dwellings that they secured from the Acadians for the purpose.

In an encampment not far off there were a number of French troops under the command of an officer named Ramesay, and learning of the arrival of the English troops at Minas, they determined to surprise and destroy them. The French were all the more determined to put an end to the invaders because they knew that Colonel Noble intended to attack them in the spring of the following year. In January therefore in bitter cold when the snow lay deep on the land, the French marshaled their men and marched toward the English encampment, thinking to surprise them utterly by an attack at such an unexpected time. They reached the village at nightfall and

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rushing upon the houses where the English were asleep caught them completely off their guard and killed a large number as they sallied half asleep from their quarters. Colonel Noble shared the fate of many of his soldiers and was shot down fighting in his shirt, while those of his men that escaped were driven away from the village, and retreated to Port Royal.

Fighting continued for the next eight years until the most northerly of all the Acadian strongholds fell into the hands of the English in 1755, giving them complete control over the entire country. In the following year the Acadians were required to swear allegiance to the English king, but were unwilling to assent to this because such an oath might compel them to bear arms against their own countrymen at some future time. Therefore deputies from all the Acadian villages went to the town of Halifax that was the chief stronghold of the English, and told Governor Lawrence that they were unwilling to take the oath that had been required of them. As soon as they left the town and returned to their homes, steps were taken to drive them all from the country, Governor Lawrence declaring that either they must submit or he would rid his entire province of such disloyal subjects.

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In this way the events came about that are narrated in the poem of *Evangeline*, and in spite of the continual warfare between the early settlers there is much to show that the Acadians were indeed the happy, thrifty and peace-loving people that Longfellow has described them. To-day the traveler to the site of the village of Grand-Pré will find the same rich and beautiful meadows and the same air of quiet repose that he reads of in Longfellow's poem, and he may even discover traces of the old Acadians, while the name of *Evangeline* is a household word throughout the entire land.



# THE STORY OF EVANGELINE



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## THE FIRST PART

### I

**I**N the land of Acadia the little village called Grand-Pré once stood near to the shore of the blue and pleasant bay named Minas Basin. It was built by the French people who were known as Acadians and who named their village from the vast and fertile meadows that stretched to the eastward, giving pasture to countless flocks of sheep and cattle. The Acadians were thrifty and industrious farmers, proud of the fertile country that they created from the wilderness, and they took especial delight in the rich fields and meadowlands that formerly had been no more than a desolate waste of marsh. For the country where they lived had once been flooded in many places by the waters of the Bay of Fundy where the ocean tides sweep in with mighty power, rising as high as the tops of houses and rolling into the streams and rivers

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until they too must rise and overflow their banks; and the Acadians had built great dykes to guard against the tides in the manner of the people of Holland, draining the water from the marshes and allowing the land to dry beneath the sun and wind until it had become so rich and green, with such delicious and abundant grass that cattle fattened there more quickly than anywhere else and the cows that were driven forth at dawn to graze upon those meadows returned at milking time with their udders filled almost to bursting. Dykes and meadows, however, were not the only signs in that fair country of the industry and labor of the Acadians. They had planted fields of flax and orchards that in springtime sent the perfume of their blossoms over all the land, and they made the valley that they lived in so trim and peaceful that it seemed to frighten away the fogs and storms of the North Atlantic. Clouds of mist from the ocean would often hover on the crests of the mountains about the valley, but never descended to blight the crops of the villages, and the storms of winter seemed to visit the farms of the Acadians less roughly than the homes of their neighbors in the country surrounding them.

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The Acadians built their houses in the manner of their former homes in Europe with thatched roofs and dormer windows and frames of sturdy oak and chestnut wood, so that a stranger passing through their village, might have fancied himself in Normandy or Brittany whence they came. Only one thing was lacking and this would have caused a stranger to wonder greatly, for they had neither locks to their doors nor bars for their windows, feeling not the slightest need to guard against their neighbors and with minds wholly free from fear and malice in all things. What belonged to one was shared by all his friends and everybody was so happy and contented that people to-day would have good reason to wish themselves equally fortunate. Every evening the maids and matrons of the village gathered in their doorways, spinning flax, exchanging gossip and greeting affectionately the village priest when he came forth to walk among his people, and every evening, too, the laborers would be summoned from their work in the fields by the church bells ringing the Angelus. Then, as the sun was setting the blue smoke would rise in a hundred columns from the cottages to tell the entire countryside of cheer-

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ful homes and pleasant hearths of the happy Acadian farmers.

Wealthiest of them all was Benedict Bellefontaine, a hale and hearty old man of seventy winters with snow-white hair and cheeks as brown as oak leaves. He was greatly respected in the village, not only because he was honest and kind and had amassed great riches, but because his daughter, Evangeline, was the most beautiful maiden that the Acadians had ever seen. Her eyes were as black as thorn berries, yet tender and of starry brightness; her hair was a soft, glossy brown, lovely to look upon. As she bore the flagons of home-brewed ale to the harvesters in the fields there was something about her even fairer than her beautiful eyes and hair, something that the harvesters could not have described, but that caused them to rest on their scythes and gaze after her when she passed, and on Sundays, when the tone of the church bell was in the air, she seemed even lovelier as she walked down the long village street with her chaplet of beads and her missal, clad in her Norman cap and her blue kirtle and wearing the earrings that had been brought from France in days long gone by and that had





"DOWN THE LONG STREET SHE PASSED"—Page 142





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been handed down from mother to daughter for generations. On Sundays there appeared to rest about Evangeline a celestial brightness, something holy and of saint-like radiance, and when she walked homeward serenely after confession it would seem like the ceasing of exquisite music when she had passed.

The home of Evangeline and her father was the very sort of dwelling that one who knew the sturdy old farmer and his beautiful daughter would expect. It was strongly built of oaken rafters and it stood on the side of a high hill overlooking the sea. By the door was a large sycamore-tree with woodbine wreathed around its trunk, and the farmhouse had a roughly carved porch with seats enough to welcome many visitors. A footpath led from the house through a wide orchard, disappearing in the meadows that stretched beyond it, and beneath the branches of the sycamore-tree were beehives from which Farmer Benedict's table was supplied with the most delicious honey. The hives were overhung by penthouses such as the traveler often sees in distant regions built over a poor box or above an image of the blessed virgin, Mary. Farther down on the hillside was the deep, cool

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well with its moss-grown bucket bound with hoops of iron, with an ample trough for the horses standing near-by, and to the north of the house, shielding it from the storms and cutting blasts of winter, were the barns and the farmyard. There stood the broad wheeled wagons and the plows and harrows and all the implements that the Acadians used in laboring in the fields, and there, too, were the sheepfolds and the feathered kingdom of the lordly and insolent turkey-gobbler, while the cocks crowed with the selfsame voice that had startled the penitent Peter in ages long gone by. The barns almost formed a village by themselves they were so many, and all of them were filled to bursting with dry, sweet-scented hay. A roof of thatch projected over each and a staircase led up to the well-filled, odorous corn lofts under the sheltering eaves. The dove-cote stood there also with its meek and innocent inmates murmuring constantly of love, and above the barns the noisy and gilded weathercocks spun to every breeze that stirred, and rattled and sang loudly when the wind changed.

There on his sunny farm Benedict lived at peace with God and the world, and his daughter Evangeline managed the affairs of his household.

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It is not to be supposed that so lovely a maiden as Evangeline was to go unnoticed by the youths of the Acadian village, and in fact she had so many suitors that all the other girls, although many of them were beautiful and deserving of the strongest and most generous sweethearts, were in danger of being left without attention because so many of the village lads had eyes for no one but Evangeline. Many a youth who knelt in church fixed his eyes on the daughter of Farmer Benedict far more often than on his missal book, and many a suitor came to her door in the twilight with a heart that beat more loudly than the knocker of iron when he heard the sound of her footsteps within coming to greet him. On the feast of the Patron Saint and on all the festivities that were indulged in by the village farmers some youth, grown bolder than the others, was pretty sure to press her hand while the villagers were dancing and to whisper in her ear some word of love that seemed to form a part of the sounding music. But of all the youths that showed by word and look their admiration for Evangeline, and of all the suitors that came to the house of Benedict to court her, only one was truly welcome in her sight.

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This lucky one was Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the blacksmith. He had known and loved Evangeline from early childhood, for their fathers were close friends and allowed their children to grow up as brother and sister. The boy and the girl had learned their letters out of the same book and were taught by the good priest, Father Felician, who was also the village teacher. And when their tasks were ended they would hurry hand in hand to Basil's forge to gaze upon the wonders that awaited them there, for they delighted to see the brawny smith take the hoof of a horse in his leather lap as a plaything and nail the shoe into place with swift, sure blows, and they loved to gaze upon the great heap of fiery cinders with the tire of a cart-wheel heated red hot in the heart of it, lying there like a coiled and lurid snake, casting a fierce glow upon their faces. On the long autumn evenings when everything had grown dark and when the smithy seemed bursting with the light that streamed from every chink and crevice, Gabriel and Evangeline would hasten there to warm themselves by the forge and to watch the puffing bellows drive the sparks to leap high in the darkness, and while they did so they would look upon Basil the blacksmith with great

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round eyes of wonder, thinking him the strongest and the most marvelous man that they had ever seen. Indeed the two children were not far wrong in this surmise, the name of the smith being as widely honored in Grand-Pré as that of Benedict himself, for the blacksmith's trade was respected in the village as it had been by the people of all ages and nations, and Basil was a mighty and a kind-tempered man.

Many other pleasures were shared by the two children, who dearly loved to go coasting in the winter time, and often rode on the same sled, bounding down the hillside as swift as the dart of an eagle to glide away over the frozen meadows with shouts and laughter. When it rained they would play in the great, dim barns and walk along the rafters hunting for swallows' nests, where they hoped to find that wonderful stone that the swallow is said to bring in its bill from the seashore and keep in its nest to restore the sight of its fledglings. They believed the story and thought that whoever found the stone would be blessed with great good fortune through all the days of his life. But Gabriel and Evangeline were blessed with fortune even without it, for the boy became a tall, fine youth with a face so bright and cheer-



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ful as to gladden the hearts of all that saw him, while Evangeline grew into a woman with a woman's hopes and desires, and she was so lovely that the farmers called her the "Sunshine of Saint Eulalie" which they believed to be the most wonderful sunshine of all, ripening their crops and loading their orchards with apples.

## II

THE time of the year had come when the nights grow cold and long and the sun, retreating to the south, enters the sign of the zodiac that is called the Scorpion. Above the village of Grand-Pré flew thousands of birds of passage shunning the icy bays of the north and seeking tropical islands and warm sunshine thousands of miles away. Many signs foretold that the coming winter would be unusually cold, for the bees, with prophetic instinct of future want, filled their hives with honey to overflowing and the fur of the foxes was so thick that the Indian hunters declared the winter season would be bitter. Harvests were gathered in and wood was cut in great abundance and the villagers all hastened to complete their tasks before the snow and ice should come upon them. For even in September the wild winds wrestled with the trees of the forest as Jacob wrestled with the angel; and at dawn and in the evening came the icy breath of the north.

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Then, like the lull before the gale, arrived the beautiful season that the pious Acadian farmers called the "Summer of All Saints." The air was filled with a dreamy and magical light and the hills and meadows seemed to reassume the freshness of springtime. Even the restless heart of the ocean was for a moment consoled and the Basin of Minas lay like a still, blue lake beneath the quiet sky. The air was so calm and soft that all sounds seemed to blend into gentle music. The voices of children at play, the crowing of the cocks in the farmyards, the whirl of the wings of pigeons and their cooing in the dove cotes became as subdued and low in tone as so many murmurs of love; and the great sun beamed upon the country through the golden vapors of autumn. Hills and fields were beautiful to behold in that mellow sunlight, for the forests arrayed themselves in robes of russet and scarlet and yellow, and each tree flashed like a flame of the sun itself. When the leaves were wet in the morning dew they sparkled as brightly as the precious stones that the Persians hung upon the plane-tree thousands of years ago when the mighty king, Xerxes, while traveling through Asia Minor, was so impressed



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with its beauty that he ordered his followers to adorn its boughs with jewels.

Day had departed and the evening star burned more and more brightly in the sky as twilight deepened on the earth. The lowing of the cattle sounded loud through the quiet air as they walked homeward, pawing the ground and tossing their heads and breathing the freshness of the evening. First of them all came Evangeline's beautiful heifer as white as snow, bearing a tinkling cowbell and proud of the ribbon that her mistress had attached to her collar; and following came the shepherd with his flock from the seaside where the sheep had found their favorite pasturage. The shepherd's dog brought up the rear full of importance as he urged the bleating stragglers onward, waving his bushy tail and trotting behind them with a lordly manner, superbly proud that to him alone belonged the task of guarding them. For he was lord of the flocks when the shepherd slept and their only protector when the wolves could be heard howling in the forests through the starry silence of the night. After the sheep had passed the wagons came, loaded with briny hay that filled the air with its odor,

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and the horses neighed cheerily at the prospect of their stables, shaking the dew from their fetlocks and manes and making the crimson tassels that adorned their heavy wooden saddles nod as brightly as do hollyhocks, heavy with blossoms, when shaken by the wind. In the meanwhile the cows stood patiently to be milked, yielding their udders to the milkmaid's hand, while the foaming streamlets descended into the sounding pails in loud and regular cadence, and the lowing of cattle and peals of laughter came from the farmyard. There followed the closing of barn doors and the rattle of wooden bars, and at last the calm silence of evening stole upon the entire village.

That evening was to be a notable one for Benedict and Evangeline, for the maiden's betrothal to Gabriel was formally to be sealed with a written contract in which the amount of her dowry was to be decided on. This was the custom of the Acadians, and the fathers of the two lovers were to meet that very evening with the notary public of the village and determine how many sheep and cattle Evangeline should bring to her young husband and how many of Benedict's goodly acres should be given to Gabriel to help him start in life on his own account.

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Farmer Benedict was seated in his great armchair beside his hearth waiting for his visitors, and Evangeline sat beside her father spinning flax for the loom that stood in the corner behind her. The fire cast a warm and ruddy glow throughout the room and the faces of carven oak upon the arms of Benedict's chair seemed to laugh in the flickering light as though they knew what business was in store and how pleasant it would be for the old farmer to see his daughter settled and happy with her lover. The firelight was reflected brightly from row upon row of pewter plates on the dresser that were polished until they seemed like the shields of an army advancing in the sunlight, and Benedict's huge, misshapen shadow danced on the wall, vanishing into darkness with strange gestures as the flames leaped from the birch logs on the hearth. Benedict was happy and glad at heart and hummed to himself the fragments of old songs that he used to hear in his boyhood—ditties and Christmas carols that his fathers loved to sing in their Norman orchards and sunny Burgundian vineyards long before they heard of the land of Acadia. While the old man sang, the drone of Evangeline's spinning wheel seemed to bear him accompaniment and to unite the fragments of his song; and

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as footfalls may be heard in church when the choir ceases its chant or as the words of the priest come sounding from the altar through the silence, the clock could be heard ticking with measured cadence in every pause of Benedict's singing.

While Evangeline and her father were sitting in this manner footsteps were heard without and the latch of the door was suddenly lifted. Benedict knew by the sound of the hobnailed shoes that it was his friend, Basil, the blacksmith, and Evangeline with a quickly beating heart guessed rightly that her lover Gabriel accompanied his father. As the door swung open and Basil and Gabriel stepped into the room, Benedict rose from his seat and stepped forward to greet them.

"Welcome," cried he, as they paused on the threshold, "Welcome, Basil, my friend. Take your seat on the settle near the chimney-side which always seems empty without you, and take from the shelf your pipe and tobacco box. Never do you seem so like yourself as when your friendly and jovial face gleams through the curling smoke as round and red as the harvest moon through the mist of the marshes. Seat yourself and let Gabriel do likewise."

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“We greet you, Benedict,” exclaimed the blacksmith, taking his accustomed seat with a smile of pure contentment, “you are always cheerful and always must have your joke and your song, although your neighbors are filled with gloomy forebodings and see nothing but ruin ahead of them. Even when there is just cause for sorrow you continue to be as happy as though you had just picked up a horseshoe and believed in the good fortune it would bring you.”

He paused for a minute to take the pipe that Evangeline brought him, and, lighting it with a coal from the hearth, continued with a shake of his head and a trace of sadness in his voice:

“During the past four days the English ships have ridden at anchor in the mouth of the river Gaspereau, and their cannon are pointed at our village. What their design may be I do not know, but we are commanded one and all to meet in the church to-morrow when the will of the English shall be proclaimed to us and become the law of our land. Alas, Benedict, the people are greatly afraid and believe that the English intend some great mischief against us.”

“Tut, tut,” said the jovial farmer, who hated to hear



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bad news. "They should not take such a gloomy view of things, friend Basil. Neither should you encourage them in their fear, for I see that doubt has entered your heart also and that you are sorely troubled. Perhaps some friendly purpose brings these vessels to our shores. Perhaps the English harvests have been blighted by untimely rains or heat and they seek nothing more of us than leave to feed their cattle and children from our barns that are bursting with plenty. I for one do not believe the English ships will harm us."

"God grant that you may be right," said Basil with another shake of his head, "but the people of the village think far differently and by my faith I agree with them! Our last war with England is not forgotten. Every one remembers the siege of Louisburg and the encounters of Beau Séjour and Port Royal. Many of our neighbors have already fled from their houses to hide in the forest and are lurking there with anxious hearts as to the fate in store for us to-morrow. The English have taken away our guns and all our weapons and have left us nothing but the mower's scythe and my own blacksmith's sledge-hammer."

"Why, then," said the careless Benedict, apparently

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not the least disturbed by what the blacksmith told him, "what cause for fear is there in that? Are not we safer unarmed in the midst of our flocks and cornfields than our fathers were in their forts when besieged by the English cannon? Think how peaceful we are with our broad meadows about us. Not even the boisterous ocean can penetrate through our dykes. Come, my friend, take heart and let no shadow of your foolish sorrow fall upon this household, for to-night our children seal their betrothal and their house and barn are already stocked with provisions for a twelvemonth. The house is as stout and strong as the merry lads of the village could build it and René Leblanc, the notary, will soon be here with his papers and inkhorn to see that everything is done as it should be, according to the law. Let us rejoice in the happiness of our children and forget the evil that may never befall us."

A blush came to Evangeline's cheek as she sat apart with Gabriel with her hand clasped in his. It grew and deepened as her father spoke and continued when the little group had become silent, for footsteps sounded on the porch without, and the notary public entered.



### III

**R**ENÉ LEBLANC, the notary, was bent with age as the oar is bent that toils in the surf of the ocean, yet his age had not broken him and he was still as strong as many a younger man. Long shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss of the maize, hung over his shoulders. His forehead was high and great horn spectacles sat astride on his nose, giving him a look of the deepest wisdom. He was the father of twenty children and more than a hundred grandchildren loved to ride upon his knee and play with his great watch while he told them marvelous stories, for the old man had been a soldier in his day and had fought in the wars.

Once he had even been cast into prison where he languished four long years, accused of being friendly to the English with whom the French were fighting at the time, and in his later days he loved to tell of this adventure and of others that had befallen him. He became famous as the village story-teller, loved by every one that knew him, but endeared especially to the hearts of all the children. He was ripe in wisdom, knowing

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every village legend by heart, and he would tell tales of the strange wolf-beast called the *Loup-garou* that was said to haunt the forest, and of the goblin that came in the darkest hours of the night to water the horses. Often he would frighten little children nearly out of their wits by describing to them the white *Létiche*, the ghost of a child that had died before it was christened, and had been condemned to become invisible and haunt the rooms of children ever since. Hundreds of wonderful fables flowed from his lips, for he knew what the oxen talked about in the stable on Christmas eve, and how the fever might be cured by a spider shut up in a nutshell and kept near the bedside of a sick person—and he knew the marvelous powers of the four-leafed clover and the horse-shoe and everything strange and wonderful that had ever been written down in village traditions.

Up rose Basil the blacksmith as the notary entered, knocking the ashes from his pipe and extending his right hand in welcome. The thought of the English ships was still troubling him and forgetful of Benedict's reproof this was the first thing that he spoke about to the notary.

"Tell me, Father Leblanc," he exclaimed, "if you

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have heard the village gossip about the ships that are now in the harbor and if you know their errand or any news of them. My heart troubles me I must confess, and I cannot imagine why they have come to our shores unless they have some wicked design upon us."

"Gossip in plenty have I heard," answered the notary, "and yet, Basil, I can tell no better than the others what the errand of these ships may be. I do not think, that they plan to harm us, for our countries are now at peace and they have no reason for so doing."

"God's name!" shouted the hasty blacksmith who was somewhat quick-tempered and irascible. "Must we look for the why and the wherefore whenever danger threatens us? Injustice is done every day and might is far too often the only excuse the wicked can give for all their mischief."

Old René Leblanc did not heed the blacksmith's sudden burst of temper, but said calmly:

"Man is unjust I know too well, but God is just and his will must always triumph in the end. I remember a story of God's justice that often consoled me when I was a prisoner in the old French fort at Port Royal."

The blacksmith and Farmer Benedict knew only too well what was coming, for the story that the notary had

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in mind was one of his prime favorites and he loved to repeat it whenever his neighbors complained that injustice had been done to them. The people of Grand-Pré knew it by heart, but none the less they always listened attentively when it pleased the aged man to tell it to them.

“Long ago,” said the notary, “there was an ancient city whose name I cannot think of for the moment, and in the center of the public square there stood a column on the top of which was a statue all of brass. This statue was the figure of Justice with the scales in its left hand and the sword in its right as justice is always represented. It had been placed in the square to show that order and obedience ruled the country, presiding over the laws of the land as well as the hearts and homes of the people. It came to pass, however, that the laws of the city became corrupted and that the statue had no meaning for the inhabitants. They allowed it to become dull and tarnished until only the sword remained bright, and the birds became so bold as to build their nests in the scales that the statue held in its left hand. The weaker among the people of the city were oppressed and the stronger ruled with a rod of iron until no man might seek redress against his neighbor unless he was rich and powerful, while inno-

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cent persons were often punished for crimes that they had not committed, and nobody dared to denounce the wrong or seek redress for the evil deeds that were done in the name of the law.

“It chanced that a nobleman who lived in the city lost a beautiful pearl necklace and that he became very angry in consequence, believing it to have been stolen. He questioned all his retainers as to the theft and finally suspected a poor orphan girl who lived in his household as a serving maid. She was tried for her supposed offense and being unable to show that she had *not* stolen the necklace, was condemned to be put to death in the public square at the foot of the statue of Justice. A great crowd assembled to see her meet her doom, which she did with patience and bravery; and as her innocent spirit ascended to the throne of her Father in Heaven, lo and behold, a tempest rose over the city with thunder and lightning, and a thunderbolt struck the statue of brass and broke off the scales that were in the left hand, hurling them down to the pavement. In the hollow of the scales was the nest of a magpie and what do you believe the people found there? Nothing else than the pearl necklace they believed the maiden had stolen. It had



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been taken by a magpie and was woven by the mischievous bird into the clay-built walls of its nest.”

The old notary gazed triumphantly about him as he finished, believing that he had completely answered all the fears of the blacksmith, but Basil, although silenced was not convinced, nor did he see what René’s story had to do with the English ships that were in the harbor. Sulkily he sought for some ready answer but seemed unable to find one, and his gloomy thoughts were written on his face as vapors are frozen in fantastic shapes upon the window-panes in winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brass lamp on the table and brought to her father and his guests the home-brewed, nut-brown ale so strong that it had become famous throughout the village, and she filled the pewter tankard to overflowing, while the notary drew his papers and ink-horn from his pocket and placing them on the table wrote in his clear, bold hand the date of the betrothal and the age of the two lovers, duly naming the number of sheep and cattle that should become a part of Evangeline’s dowry and proceeding in an orderly manner in all things until his business was completed. Then the great seal of the law was set like a sun upon the margin of the doc-

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ument and Farmer Benedict paid the notary three times the fee required, flinging the pieces of silver upon the table, so that they rang loud and spun around as they fell from his open hand. Old René Leblanc pocketed the money and blessed the bride and bridegroom, lifting high the tankard of ale Evangeline had poured for him and drinking to their welfare. Then he wiped the foam from his lip and after a solemn bow took his departure, leaving the others to sit musing silently by the fireside.

No sound was heard except the crackling of the logs upon the hearth until Evangeline drew forth the checker-board from its accustomed place and the blacksmith and her father fell to playing. Soon the game waxed high as they contended against each other in the utmost friendship, chuckling at every lucky play and laughing outright at some successful maneuver when a man was crowned or a breach was made in the king row. In the meanwhile the two lovers had seated themselves near a window where the firelight fell less strongly upon them and they whispered together tenderly as they watched the moon rise over the pallid sea and beheld the silver mist advance along the meadows. And as they sat wrapped in each other and whispering words of love they saw the



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countless stars begin to show themselves in the infinite meadows of heaven, blossoming there like the forget-me-nots of the angels.

Evening passed and at the hour of nine the village curfew sounded from the belfry when all persons young and old must seek their rest. Basil and Gabriel rose and took their departure, Gabriel lingering at the door to whisper many a farewell word and sweet good-night into the maiden's ear until her heart beat high with gladness. Then the embers that glowed upon the hearth were carefully covered with ashes and the tread of Farmer Benedict resounded on the oaken stairway as he mounted to his rest. Soon Evangeline followed him, bearing a lamp and moving up the staircase luminous in the darkness, that seemed to be lighted not so much by the lamp she bore as by her shining face all radiant with the gladness of her love and the thought of the morrow's joy when the wedding festival should be celebrated. Up she mounted, passing through the dark hall to her chamber, a simple room, flooded by the moonlight that showed the snow-white curtains and the high and ample clothespress on whose roomy shelves were folded carefully the linen and woolen stuffs that she had woven with her own hand.

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They were a portion of the dowry she was to bring to her young husband and a part that she deemed even better than the flocks and herds of her father because it showed her industry and skill as a housewife. Soon she extinguished her lamp, her heart and eyes obeying the power of the moonlight that streamed through the window mellow and radiant, surrounding her with its glory, and she stood with naked, snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of her chamber, beautiful to behold. Little did she dream that Gabriel had not departed when he bade her good-night at the doorway, but lingered in the orchard underneath her window, watching for the gleam of her lamp and the outline of her shadow on the curtain. Yet, as she stood there her thoughts were all of him, and at times a feeling of sadness came like a veil of mist upon her mind as though she feared that some misfortune was to overtake them both. Gazing from the window she saw the moon pass serenely from the bosom of a cloud with one bright star that seemed to follow in its footsteps, even as Hagar passed from Abraham's tent to wander forth with Ishmael, and as the moon moved out into the open sky Evangeline's sadness vanished.

#### IV

ON the next morning the sun rose pleasantly over the village and the Basin of Minas gleamed blue and clear beneath the brilliant sky, beautiful to behold in the silent air with the images of the ships that were riding at anchor mirrored on the water's tranquil surface. Life had been astir in the village since cockcrow and labor with noisy clamor had called the young and the old to come forth into the golden and sunlit morning. But every task was laid aside when the merry Acadian country folk commenced to come from their distant farms and from the neighboring hamlets, brightening all the air with their many-colored costumes and seeming to gladden the heart of the day itself with their laughter and cheerful greetings. Groups of young people flocked over the green meadows toward the village, and wagon after wagon filled with holiday makers rolled across the greensward where no road was to be seen except the track of their own wheels upon the grass. Soon the streets of the village were thronged with people and noisy groups

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clustered about the house doors, sitting in the welcome sunshine and rejoicing and gossiping together. All things were in common among those simple people who lived like brothers and who shared not only their belongings but their joys and sorrows also with all their neighbors. It seemed as if their hospitality and kindness could not flow more freely until one found himself beneath the roof of Farmer Benedict, where welcome and plenty were even more abundant than in the rest of the village. This was scarcely to be wondered at, however, because Evangeline stood near her father welcoming his guests, and her face was bright with smiles as she gave each newcomer some kindly word of greeting that made him smile with gladness in his turn. For the cup tasted sweeter to Benedict's guests because it was bestowed upon them by the hand of his daughter, that seemed to bless it as she gave it to them.

Then came the Feast of Betrothal. It was spread beneath the open sky in the perfumed air of the orchard, where the boughs of every tree were bent almost to breaking beneath their burden of golden fruit. In the shadow of the porch sat the village priest and the notary with Farmer Benedict near-by and the sturdy blacksmith,

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Basil, seated beside him. Not far off from them, close to the beehives and the cider-press, old Michael, the fiddler, had been placed, and his heart was as bright and gay as the splendid waistcoat that he had put on for the occasion. His jolly face glowed like a burning coal when the ashes have been blown from the embers and his long, white hair waved in the morning wind beneath the flickering shadows of the leaves in the bright sunshine. Michael, although old, was an ardent musician and accompanied the vibrant scraping of his fiddle with the merriest of songs. Every now and then he would beat time to the music with his wooden shoes, nodding his head in the meanwhile with great gusto, and before long he had set the guests beside themselves with the rhythm of his playing until they could remain seated no longer. With one accord they rose and fell to dancing. The music sounded faster and faster and their feet whirled merrily and more merrily. Madly they leaped in the dizzy reel under the orchard trees and down the path to the meadows, old men and young, girls and matrons, lovers and their sweet-hearts, while the romping children jumped and whirled and tumbled in their midst. Madly the hours passed, and Benedict's eye became bright as he beheld the pleas-



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ure of his guests while Basil's honest face was all aglow with pride and happiness, for he could see that his son, Gabriel, was the noblest of all the assembled youths, just as Evangeline was the loveliest among the maidens.

Thus the morning passed away and suddenly with loud and discordant summons the church bell clanged from its tower in peremptory command and a drum-beat rolled across the meadows. The Acadians one and all were compelled to leave their feasting and merry making, for the hour had come when the will of the English was to be made known to them. They assembled with fear and misgiving that was in no way lessened when they saw the church surrounded with soldiers who allowed no one to enter there but the farmers themselves, the young men and the heads of families, while the women and children were compelled to wait in the churchyard without, where they spent the time in bringing forth fresh garlands of leaves and evergreens to decorate the headstones of the graves. In the meanwhile the men within sat silently or whispered to each other with bated breath in bitter misgiving as to the fate that might be in store for them.

Then came another clamorous beating of drums and

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a file of soldiers from the ships marched haughtily into the church, closing the ponderous oaken door in the faces of the poor women without, who had crowded at their heels to hear and see what was about to happen. The drums did not cease beating even after they had entered, but echoed from the walls in insolent clangor until the commander of the soldiers in his scarlet coat ascended the steps of the altar and showed to the frightened Acadians the royal commission with its seals to prove that he was acting through the order of the English king.

“Let there be silence,” commanded the officer, “and hear what I have to say. You have been gathered here by the order of His Majesty who has treated you with every kindness and forbearance up to the present day, while you have constantly returned evil for his good and have shown yourselves too ready to disobey him. Let your own hearts tell you if my words are not truly spoken, and ask yourselves if you have been loyal to the English king whom you have sworn to serve. My present errand is most painful to me and will prove itself more grievous still to you. Yet I must bow to the will of my king and obey him as you will be forced to do even more stringently than I myself. Know then that King George de-



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clares your lands and homes and cattle a forfeit to the crown, while you yourselves shall one and all be taken away from this country and banished to other lands. In the meanwhile I shall keep you here as prisoners in the king's name."

For a moment after the officer ceased speaking there was absolute silence, the unhappy Acadians being too amazed to realize fully and in a moment what a terrible fate had fallen upon them. But then, as when a deadly hailstorm bursts on a summer afternoon, beating down the farmer's corn and shattering his windows, hiding the sun in darkness and casting ruin and desolation on all the earth, the words that had just been spoken fell on their hearts in all their deadly import and a wail of sorrow and anger rose through the church. Moved as by one impulse the terrified people rushed to the doorway hoping to make their escape, but they found it barred and guarded by the soldiers who drove them back with their bayonets, and the holy house of prayer reëchoed to wild outcries and fierce imprecations as the prisoners were forced into its center. Then the figure of Basil the blacksmith could be seen towering above the heads of the people as a spar rises on



"THERE AT THE DOOR THEY STOOD WITH WONDERING EYES TO BEHOLD HIM"  
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the waves of a stormy ocean and his voice could be heard in bellowing thunder above the tumult, crying:

“Down with the British tyrants! Death to these foreign soldiers who would seize our homes and our harvests! We never swore allegiance to them!”

He would have said much more, but the merciless hand of a soldier struck him heavily across the mouth and he was dragged down to the pavement.

In the midst of all this strife and terror and confusion, the door of the chancel opened and the village priest, Father Felician, entered with a grave and serious mien and slowly ascended the steps of the altar whence the arrogant English officer had just delivered his terrible words. The face of the priest was sad and he raised his hand with a solemn gesture that awed the shouting throng into instant silence. Then he spoke to his people in so deep and serious a voice, with such measured and sorrowful accents, that each word could be heard as distinctly as the striking of a clock after the alarum of the tocsin.

“What is this you do, my children?” the priest reproved them. “What madness has suddenly possessed you? I have labored among you for more than forty



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years and had taught you, I believed, to love one another in deed as well as in word. Has not our Holy Father bidden us to love our enemies? Is this the way that you repay my toil and prayer, my constant vigils and privation? Look where the crucified image of Christ gazes down upon you from His cross and behold the meekness and holy compassion that rest in those sorrowful eyes. See how those lips still seem to repeat the prayer, 'O Father, forgive them,' as we shall now repeat it in this hour when the wicked assail and injure us."

Thus did he rebuke them briefly with sorrow and compassion in his voice. But few as his words were they sank deeply into the hearts of his people and sobs of contrition as well as of grief commenced to be heard from the assemblage before him, succeeding the noisy and passionate outbreak against the wicked injustice of the English. One and all they sank to their knees and repeated with their priest the prayer, "O Father, forgive them," while the soldiers that were still in the church looked at one another uneasily as the words of their supplication were reëchoed from the walls. Then came the evening service and the tapers gleamed from the altar. The voice of Father Felician was deep and fervent and the people

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responded from the very depths of their hearts. They sang the Ave Maria as with one voice, and when they knelt in prayer they felt their souls triumphant and exalted through the ardor of their devotion.

If the evil tidings had smitten the imprisoned farmers sorely, the women and children without were far more badly frightened as they wandered wailing from house to house a prey to the wildest rumors as to what was to become of them and ignorant of the fate that had befallen their husbands and fathers who were held imprisoned in the church.

Evangeline stood long in her father's doorway, shielding her eyes from the the level rays of the setting sun that lit the long village street with mysterious splendor, gilding the thatch of every peasant's cottage until it shone like a roof of gold, and emblazoning its glory in reflected flame upon the window-panes. Indoors the maiden had spread the snowy cloth upon the table where waited the wheaten loaf, the fragrant honey, the tankard of ale and the cheese fresh from the dairy against Farmer Benedict's return, while his great armchair at the head of the board seemed to expect him.

The sunset cast the long shadows of trees upon the



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meadows and the dimness of twilight commenced to fall upon the village as Evangeline waited there with a shadow on her spirit even deeper than that of the approaching evening. Yet it seemed as though her unhappiness was graciously transformed within her heart, for charity, patience and forgiveness rose to give her strength for her coming trouble. And when the great sun sank to rest, veiling the light of his face in golden and glimmering vapors, Evangeline left her father's house and wandered into the village, consoling the frightened women and cheering their disconsolate hearts with the utmost kindness. But when they departed over the darkening meadows, driven back to their homes by their household cares and the needs of their hungry children who were clamoring for their suppers, the maiden could no longer contain herself, but hastened to the church where she knew that Gabriel was held a prisoner.

The churchyard was still and dark and no light or sound of any voice came to her ear as she looked and listened at the doors and windows. Then, overcome by emotion, she cried aloud, calling the name of her lover, but no answer came from within and it seemed to her that the church had become a tomb for the living even

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more gloomy than the graves for the dead that surrounded her in the churchyard. Slowly she returned to the empty house of her father where the fire was smoldering on the hearth and the supper stood untasted on the table. Each room was empty and desolate, haunted by the phantoms of terrors that seemed all the more menacing because she did not know just what forms they would take or what misfortunes might be in store for her. Her footstep echoed hollow and forlorn on the oaken stairway and on the floor of her chamber above, and in the middle of the night she heard the rustling rain fall loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree that stood outside of her window. Lightning flashed and the stern voice of the thunder rumbled in the heavens above, telling her that God was on his throne, governing the world that he had created. As Evangeline thought of God, she remembered the story told by the aged notary of the statue of Justice and the vindication of the poor girl who had suffered death beneath it when wrongfully accused of theft. As the story came into her mind she was troubled no longer, but with a quieted soul slept peacefully until the morning.

## V

FOUR days passed and still the Acadian farmers were held prisoners in the church, while the women were compelled to pack the household goods that the English had consented they might take away with them into exile. Four times the sun rose and set and on the fifth morning soon after the cock had crowed as cheerily as though nothing sad and terrible was about to happen, a silent and mournful procession came from the neighboring hamlets and farms, headed toward the seashore where the boats from the English vessels were drawn up in a row awaiting them. There were ponderous wagons filled with household furniture, each one of them driven by a sorrowing woman with her children walking beside her, or by some maiden weary with her efforts in tasks that were beyond her strength and not even knowing if her father or brothers were still alive or if she would set eyes on them again. Little children trooped together, some clutching fragments of toys that they could not bear to part with and crying because they were afraid of the red coats and the muskets and drums of the English soldiers.

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And many a time, as the doleful procession wound its way toward the shore, some woman would turn in her seat as she drove the wagon to look back with tears upon the home that she was leaving forever.

In this way the weak and unfortunate were hurried by the rough soldiers to the seashore at the mouth of the river Gaspereau, where their belongings were stacked in piles on the sand and the waiting boats commenced to carry them to the vessels. All day long the boats plied back and forth and all day long the wagons came and went from the deserted village. Late in the afternoon there was a beating of drums in the churchyard and the women and children thronged in the direction of the sound. The doors swung suddenly apart and the guard of English soldiers marched into the open, while amid them, walking in a gloomy procession, came the long imprisoned but patient Acadian farmers. Slowly they descended the steps of the church, singing as they came, even as pilgrims sing when far from home, striving to forget their weariness with music. First came the young men, singing with tremulous lips a Catholic chant and after them the older ones who took up the burden of their hymn, while the women who stood by the wayside joined

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the sacred psalm as the men passed. Even the birds that flew in the sunlight above mingled their notes with the sound of the song that rose to them, and their singing floated down from the heights of the air like the voices of departed spirits.

Halfway between the shore and the church Evangeline waited for her father and for Gabriel, not weeping and overcome with grief as were some of the others, but strong in the hour of her affliction with many a kind and consoling word for her unhappy neighbors. Finally she heard the sound of the men's voices and saw Gabriel in the foremost rank with his face pale from emotion. Then for the first time tears filled her eyes and she ran eagerly to meet him, clasping his hands in hers and resting her head upon his shoulder while she whispered to him: "Oh, Gabriel, be of good heart, for if we truly love each other nothing can truly harm us, no matter what misfortunes we must suffer."

Evangeline smiled through her tears as she spoke, but suddenly the smile ceased when she beheld her father slowly advancing toward them. For the ruddy, happy face was pale, and the cheerful demeanor that she knew so well and that Farmer Benedict's neighbors likewise



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had known and loved, had utterly disappeared. The glow had faded from his cheek with the fire from his eye and his footstep seemed to have become heavier with the weight of the heavy heart that burdened his bosom. He hardly lifted his eyes to greet his daughter, remaining silent and passive while she placed her arms about his neck and strove to cheer his spirit by whispering words of endearment where all words of comfort failed. And holding his hand in hers she walked on with him as the procession slowly moved to the river's mouth.

On the shore there was the greatest disorder and tumult, for the soldiers now were forcing the villagers into the boats with little heed as to who was placed there. Wives were parted from their husbands and carried to different vessels, and mothers saw too late that their children had been left behind and cried out wildly in their grief as they saw their little ones weeping and lifting their arms to them from the shore. Basil and Gabriel were carried away to different ships, while Evangeline stood on the beach with her father waiting for her own turn to come and fearing lest she be separated from the old man who needed her so sorely. The task of embarking the unfortunates was not half done when the sun



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went down and twilight darkened about them, while the ocean in the mighty ebb of the tide retreated far from the shore, leaving the boats of the sailors stranded on the sands and rendering all further labor for that night impossible. Then in the midst of the wagons and piled up furniture the remainder of the Acadians made their camp until the dawn while armed sentinels stood on guard near-by to see that none of them might escape and seek concealment in the forest. Fires were built on the shore and the villagers gathered about the flames to warm themselves and cook what food they had brought with them. No lights were to be seen in the silent village, and for the first time in many years no sound of church bells floated from the steeple. Slowly the darkness of night descended and the leisurely herds of cattle returned from the pastures, seeking the accustomed hand to milk them, and the shelter of the barns. They lowed as they waited at the barred gates of the farmyards, and tossed their heads in impatience, half afraid of the sudden neglect and the silence that reigned in the deserted streets of the village.

While the cattle bellowed for their mangers, the fires of driftwood that had been built on the sand from

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the weather-beaten ribs of vessels wrecked in former tempests, showed the gloomy figures and the sorrowful faces of the remaining Acadians; and from the groups that clustered about the flames came the sobbing of women and the saddened voices of men, and the wailing of little children who were cold and frightened or whose parents had been torn away from them and thrust into some one of the English ships. Father Felician wandered from fire to fire consoling his people as best he could, blessing those that still remained together and comforting the less fortunate whose loved ones had already been taken from them. It was a sad sight to see the faithful priest, his face gray and worn from weariness, toiling incessantly to lighten the burden of others and seeming to share the sorrows of every family.

As Father Felician came and went among his people he approached the place where Evangeline sat with her father, and his heavy heart sank even lower as he beheld in the flickering light of the fire the altered face of the old farmer. Benedict would not stir or speak, but sat looking at the embers with a vacant stare, while Evangeline vainly offered him food and strove to cheer his heart with comforting words and caresses. The priest also

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tried to drive away the old man's sorrow by murmuring a blessing over him, and would have added more but that his own heart was too full for words, causing his voice to halt like that of a little child when it sees some terrible scene of sorrow that it cannot understand. Therefore the priest said nothing but laid his hand in silence on Evangeline's head as she sat beside her father, and lifting his tear-filled eyes to the silent stars as they moved on their way in the heavens untroubled by the griefs and wrong-doing of mortal men, the holy father prayed for Benedict's soul that he knew must soon be quitting them for heaven. The priest had seen upon the face of his friend the signs of approaching death, and he felt that the next shock or sorrow must certainly be fatal to him. Looking at Evangeline he saw that she did not realize that her father was so soon to be taken from her, and he knew not if it would be wise to tell her of his fears or wait until the greater blow should fall upon her while she still was unaware. In his doubt and distress he sat on the sand beside her and suddenly fell to weeping; and at the sight of the priest's tears Evangeline's courage failed her and throwing herself on the sand she sobbed in terror.

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Suddenly a light was seen from the direction of the village—a light as ruddy as that of the blood red moon that climbs the crystal walls of heaven in the autumn and stretches sheets of crimson flame across the hills and meadows with black and gigantic shadows in their midst. The light became broader and fiercer until it gleamed not only from the roofs of the village but from the sea and sky itself, shining on the ships that lay at anchor and casting a strange glow on the white faces of the Acadians. Flashes of fire were then seen leaping through the clouds of ascending smoke and the roar of the furious blaze was loud and terrible as the tongues of flame leaped high from the roof of every cottage and sparks and embers were whirled into the air in myriads. At first the helpless people on the shore and in the ships were speechless from dismay, but finally a cry of anguish sounded at one instant from hundreds of voices. Cocks began to crow in the distant farmyards, thinking the strange light to be the break of day and all at once there was heard a terrible sound such as startles the sleeping encampments on the western prairies when the wild horses in sudden fear sweep past with the speed of a whirlwind, or when the bellowing herds of buffalo rush to the river. It was

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made by the Acadians' cattle and sheep and horses, terrified by the flames that were drawing near them. They broke from their folds and fences and rushed over the meadows with thundering hoof beats.

Evangeline and the kind Father Felician were so amazed and horrified by the sight before them and by the awful glare of the flames destroying the entire village that it was some minutes before they thought to speak to Benedict, who had not uttered a word amid the general outcry of terror. As they turned they saw that he had fallen from his seat and lay at length upon the sand with his face turned toward the heavens and his eyes wide open and sightless. Life had departed from the unhappy old man when he beheld the flames rise over the village and heard the sorrowful outcries of his afflicted neighbors. He lay there motionless and silent, while Evangeline dropped to her knees and threw her arms across his body, wailing in terror as the priest lifted the lifeless head and closed the staring eyes. All night long the maiden lay in a swoon with her head upon the breast of her dead father, and in the morning when she came to herself she saw a multitude of friends who had gath-



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ered at the word of the old man's death and who gazed upon her with the utmost sorrow and compassion. Then she heard a familiar voice as the priest said to the people: "Let us bury him here by the sea. When happier times bring us back to our homes from the unknown land of our exile, his sacred dust shall be piously laid in the churchyard. In the meanwhile we must pray for his departed soul."

So they buried the old farmer on the seashore without a bell to toll for him or a book from which to read his funeral service. But the priest repeated the sorrowful words that he knew by heart, and the glare of the burning village served the mourners for funeral torches. And suddenly, when the priest had become silent, a mournful sound arose like the voice of a vast congregation breathing a prayer for the dead, and the sea seemed to cry an answer to the words that had just been spoken. It was the sound of the returning tide hastening in all its might back to the seashore, where the bustle and confusion of embarking recommenced at once, and the boats began to come and go once more between the vessels and the beach. When the tide went out to sea again the



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ships went with it, bearing a nation into exile and leaving behind them the smoking ruins of the village and the body of the kindly old farmer buried on the seashore.

## THE SECOND PART

### I

MANY a weary year went by after the burning of the village of Grand-Pré, and many hardships fell to the lot of the Acadians. Their lands and harvests were given to English settlers and another race of men and other customs than their own were established in the places where Gabriel and Evangeline had played together as children, where Basil had labored at his forge and where the good-hearted Farmer Benedict had plied his hospitality. The ships that carried the unfortunate people away bore them into endless exile and scattered them as the flakes of snow are scattered when the north-east wind strikes aslant through the fogs that darken the banks of Newfoundland. For after the English vessels sailed from Minas Basin they shaped their courses for different seaports all along the American coast, and families that had sailed in different ships were separated forever and sometimes divided by the distance of the en-

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tire English colonies, unable to tell where their loved ones had been set ashore or where to go in search of them. Other misfortunes equally terrible came upon them, for the people of the towns where they landed were openly hostile to them, often driving them from their gates and refusing to give them aid in their privations. Many of the Acadians became no better than beggars and wandered starving and helpless, without friend or shelter, from city to city throughout the land in search of better fortune. Some of them visited the cold, bleak lakes of the north and built rude cabins in the wilderness, while others strayed to sultry southern regions where the alligator could be heard at night, bellowing through the silence of the swamps and where the negro slaves were driven to labor in the cotton fields, beneath the lash of the planter's whip. In every new land that they visited they sought to find homes and friends, or at least to be allowed to earn these by their labor and patience, but everywhere they were cruelly denied until their search seemed utterly hopeless. Many of them died, heartbroken and despairing before their wanderings were ended, asking nothing better than a grave by the wayside and a tablet whereon should be engraved the history of

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their sorrows and the cruelty with which they had been treated.

For many years the beautiful Evangeline was to be seen among her people, waiting and wandering with them in patience and lowliness of spirit, although she underwent as bitter hardships as any of her countrymen. She was still lovely to look upon, but there was now a certain sadness in her manner as though she knew that the desert of life was stretched ahead of her in all its vast and dreary silence, with its pathway marked by the graves of those that had journeyed before her, bearing suffering and sorrow equal to her own. And the life of this maiden, who seemed to have been born for happiness, and on whom so much early misfortune had fallen, appeared incomplete and imperfect, as though a morning in June had suddenly faded in its glory and died away into the east with all its sunshine and its music just at the hour when it should have been in its height.

What grieved Evangeline more than any of her sufferings was that Gabriel had been separated from her in the voyage and that she did not know where to search for him, and this was the most terrible thing that could possibly have happened to her except the knowledge of his

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death. With Gabriel at her side she would have learned to begin life again in some new region and to forbear to grieve for her father whose unhappy death was continually in her mind. Without either her father or lover she seemed utterly forsaken and there was a restless fever in her heart that urged her onward continually in search of Gabriel. Sometimes she would linger in strange cities and vainly hope that he might be met with there. Sometimes she would visit unknown churchyards and scan the more recent headstones, fearing lest she might see the name of her lover written on one of them, or she would sit beside some nameless grave believing that he might be sleeping there and wishing in her heart that she were at rest also. Again she would feel a sudden desire to travel further in her search and leave whatever place chance found her in, betaking herself to the weary road to toil in difficult journeys. Sometimes she would hear a rumor that Gabriel had passed that way before her and the faintest whisper of his whereabouts would be breathed into her ears, directing her forward on her way like the pointing of spirit hands. Occasionally she spoke with persons who had even seen her lover and known him in the past and then her heart would rejoice

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even though no knowledge was imparted to her as to his whereabouts. For always when such news was brought it concerned the happenings of years gone by and of places far from where she had ever traveled.

“Gabriel Lajeunesse,” some one would say. “Oh, yes, we have seen him, but it was many months ago and we do not know what has become of him since that time. He was with Basil, the blacksmith, and both went to the prairies of the west whence word came to us some time past that they had become famous hunters and trappers.”

Others would say in some different part of the country: “Gabriel Lajeunesse? That name is strangely familiar to us but we have not heard its sound for many years. He went to the lowlands of Louisiana long ago, and he became a *voyageur*.”

Then the Acadians who still accompanied Evangeline would say to her: “Dear child, do not dream and wait for your absent lover any longer. There are other youths as handsome as Gabriel and other hearts as tender and true as his. Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the son of the aged notary, who has loved you for many a tedious year and has no other desire in life but to wed you and make you happy. Why not marry him, Evangeline, give him



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your hand and be happy? You are far too fair to braid Saint Catherine's tresses and be left without a husband."

Whenever words like this were spoken, Evangeline would reply, saying, "I cannot. Where my heart has been given my hand shall be given also. For when one follows the heart it lights the pathway like a lamp that goes before and many things are made clear that otherwise lie hidden in darkness forever."

Thereupon the priest, the good Father Felician, who had ever been with Evangeline in her travels, and who loved her as tenderly as a father, would look upon her with a smile of gladness, for it delighted him always to find her so constant to her lover. And he would say:

"My daughter, your God speaks within you. Talk not of wasted affection, for affection never was wasted. If your love enrich not the heart of another its waters, returning back to their springs like rain, shall fill them full of refreshment. That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain." And he would counsel her, saying: "Have patience, Evangeline. Accomplish your labor and fulfill the task that your love for Gabriel has set before you. Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is godlike. Complete

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your work of love and your heart shall be made more fit for heaven."

The words of the kind priest always drove away the dismal forebodings that told Evangeline that she would never see Gabriel again, and after he had comforted her in this manner a whisper telling her not to despair would rise in her heart. Then she would take up her journey once again and leave her remaining friends one after one as she continued in her search. Father Felician accompanied her wherever she went and shared the sufferings of her travels. Sometimes they would be alone in the wilderness or again would fall in with some of their fellow-countrymen and travel with them for many days. But wherever they went and however far they traveled, Gabriel seemed to draw farther and farther away from the scene of their wanderings.

## II

ONE May morning on the beautiful river that flows past the Ohio shore, and past the mouth of the stream that is called the Wabash, there could be seen a heavy and cumbrous boat that was rowed by Acadian boatmen. It glided out of the river's mouth into the broader and swifter stream of the Mississippi and floated down the golden current of that mighty river. The Acadians hoped to find their friends and relatives in the southern part of the region that was called Louisiana, and were traveling there as swiftly as their oars and the current of the stream would take them. They had gathered together a considerable number of their exiled countrymen and they determined not to cease their journey until their friends had been discovered also, when they would build another village and found another Acadia in a land where the English could not molest them. Men, women and children were in the boat, and Evangeline accompanied them with her guide, Father Felician. She had a strange prophetic feeling in her heart that told her

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Gabriel was living in the south with the remnant of the Acadians that were rumored to have settled there and she had joined her countrymen in their journey southward for this reason.

The boat went on and on, gliding for hundreds of miles down the turbulent stream that flowed through the somber wilderness, and night after night the Acadians built their camp-fires on the river-bank at the edge of the gloomy forest. Every morning they rose before the sun to continue their journey southward and launched their boat anew upon a current that bore them continually through a strange and changing country. Now they would dart through rushing chutes where the flood became fast and furious as the river passed among green islands, where the cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests like waving plumes and seemed to whisper to the exiles as they glided onward, and again they would float into some broad and still lagoon, where silver sandbars lay in the stream with wimpling waves running along their margins, and where the flocks of pelicans with snow-white plumage waded in the quiet water. Ever they journeyed to the south, and the landscape about them changed more greatly as each day went by. No hills

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were to be seen and the country became flat and level. Houses of planters stood on the river-bank surrounded with luxuriant gardens whose wonderful and brightly colored flowers cast their perfume in rich clouds upon the tranquil surface of the water. The Acadians saw the negro cabins where slaves dwelt and vast fields of cotton and sugar-cane, and they knew that they were drawing near to the region of perpetual summer where the river sweeps to the eastward in a mighty curve and runs amid groves of citron and orange-trees.

Where the Mississippi swerved the Acadians changed their course also and entered the Bayou of Plaquemine. Soon they were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious waters that ran like a network of steel in every direction, and even the stoutest hearts in their whole company beat more quickly when they entered there. Over their heads the dark and towering boughs of the cypress-trees met in a gloomy arch while the river glided sullenly beneath, and trailing moss hung from the branches, waving in mid-air like the banners on the walls of ancient cathedrals. The silence in that dismal place was death-like, broken only by the cry of the heron returning to its nest at sunset and by the voice of the owl that greeted the



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moon with wild and terrible laughter. But the moonlight itself was beautiful to behold as it gleamed on the black water, shining on columns of cypress and cedar that supported the dark, leafy arches through which it fell. Everything was dreamy and indistinct and strange, and impressed its wild sadness on the spirits of the Acadians. Wonder came into their hearts and terror also, and strange forebodings of some unseen evil about to befall them—evil all the more to be feared from its uncertainty. For just as the leaves of that shrinking plant, the mimosa, will close themselves in advance at the tramp of a horse's hoof upon the prairie, the human heart will often shrink with sorrowful forebodings of evil long before the stroke of misfortune falls.

Evangeline did not share the fears and sorrows of her countrymen that might have been caused by nothing more terrible than their dismal and forlorn surroundings, for the maiden's spirit was sustained by a beautiful vision that seemed to float before her eyes continually and to beckon her onward through the moonlight. She believed that she saw Gabriel moving before her and her constant thought of him had become so powerful in her heart and mind that her lover's form did actually appear



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before her eyes. But Evangeline's vision did not rise wholly from the power of her love, for Gabriel had traveled over those same gloomy waters before her and every stroke of the oar now brought him nearer and nearer.

Suddenly, as though he felt that somebody was approaching, one of the oarsmen rose in his place in the bow of the boat, and placing his bugle to his lips, blew a loud blast that rang wildly through the dark colonnades and leafy corridors of those gloomy and sullen streams. He blew to learn if others than themselves were voyaging there, and his challenge was so powerful that the trailing banners of moss stirred to the music while a multitude of echoes awoke to his summons and sounded over the watery floor to die away in the distance beneath the reverberant branches of the forest. Not a voice replied, and from the surrounding darkness no answer came, and when the echoes died away the returning silence was like a sense of pain upon the spirits of the Acadians. Evangeline slept in utter weariness and disappointment, but the boatmen continued to row through the midnight, silent at times and then singing the familiar Canadian boat songs that in happier days were echoed from the shores of their own Acadian rivers. In the pauses between

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their songs there could be heard the mysterious sounds of the wilderness, far off and indistinct, blending together into strange and uncanny whispers, while now and then the whoop of the crane or the roar of the grim alligator came echoing to them beneath the arches of the trees.

Before another noon had passed, however, they emerged from those dismal shades and floated out upon the broad and golden waters of the lakes of the Atchafalaya that were as still as slumber itself and as smooth as pools of glass, flashing beneath the morning sun and covered with myriads of water-lilies that rocked to the slight undulations made by the passing oars. Above the heads of the boatmen the lotus flower lifted its golden crown in all its radiant beauty and the air was faint with the perfumed breath of magnolia blossoms and the heat of noon. The Acadians glided near to the shores of numberless leafy islands, scented with blossoming hedges of roses and seeming to invite them to rest their weary oars and slumber in the fragrant and delightful beds of flowers and leaves and shrubbery prepared for them by nature on the banks. Soon they yielded to the restful summons of the land and suspended their oars

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beside the fairest of those islands, drawing their boat to the shore beneath the boughs of high Wachita willow-trees that grew upon the margin of the water. There a magical sleep came over the tired travelers, who were wearied to the point of exhaustion by their midnight toil, and they slumbered beneath a huge, cool cedar-tree that lifted its mighty boughs above them in protection, while they slept. Swinging from the vast arms of this tree hung the trumpet-flower and the grape-vine, trailing down their ladder of fairy-like and leafy ropes that seemed like the ladder of Jacob on whose pendulous stairs the angels ascended and descended. In this case, however, the angels were the swift, bright-colored humming-birds that floated from blossom to blossom on the vines, but Evangeline beheld the more heavenly vision as she slept beneath the tree. Her heart was filled with love as she slumbered there and the dawn of an opening paradise lighted her dreaming soul with the glory of heavenly things.

It seemed indeed that destiny determined that Evangeline should lose her lover, Gabriel, forever and continue to weary herself in search of him throughout her lifetime, and that the slumber of the Acadians beneath





"CLOSE AT HER FATHER'S SIDE WAS THE GENTLE EVANGELINE SEATED"

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the cedar-tree was the result of some binding spell cast upon them for this purpose and no other. While they slept and dreamed in the fragrance and heat of the summer noon, a boat was drawing nearer and ever nearer to them among the numberless islands—a light, swift boat that sped upon the water urged on its course by the sinewy arms of hunters and trappers. Its prow was turned to the north to the land of the bison and beaver, and at the helm sat a youth with dark and neglected locks overshadowing his brow and a careworn face on which was plainly written a sadness beyond his years. It was Gabriel who could bear no longer to wait idly for Evangeline, and who had become so unhappy and restless in his constant thought of her that he sought to forget himself and his sorrow in the wilderness of the west whither he and his companions were traveling. They glided swiftly along their course until they were not a stone's throw from the boat that had been drawn beneath the willows, and Gabriel, if he had only known, could have taken fifty steps across the island and lifted the sleeping Evangeline in his arms. But his boat passed by on the opposite side of the island, behind a leafy screen that concealed the other boat drawn up be-



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neath the willows and neither he nor his companions saw it.

The Acadians slept on, undisturbed by the dash of their countrymen's oars and the voices of the hunters as they passed, for no angel was at hand to awaken the sleeping maiden as her lover glided by. He passed with his companions as swiftly as the shadow of a cloud upon the prairie and not until the sound of the oars in the thole pins had died in the far distance did the sleepers awaken from the slumber that had come over them with such unhappy consequences.

When she woke, Evangeline said with a sigh to her counselor, the kind-hearted priest, "O Father Felician! Something in my heart tells me that Gabriel is wandering near me. Is it a foolish dream, or has some angel passed, revealing the truth to my spirit?" Then she added with a blush, "Alas, my fancy is too credulous and I believe too readily what I desire to be true. Such words must sound idle to your ears and to be without a meaning."

But the reverend priest answered, smiling with gladness as he did so: "My daughter, your words are not idle, nor are they meaningless to me. Feeling is silent and deep and the word that floats on the surface is like

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the tossing buoy on the face of the waters that tells where the anchor is hidden. Trust to your heart and to what the world calls illusions, for Gabriel is truly near you. Know that not far away to the southward are the towns of St. Maur and St. Martin, where the long wandering bride shall be given to her bridegroom and where you will find your happiness after so many years of seeking. I too shall be happy there and regain my flock and my sheepfold, and the people that I love will welcome their long absent pastor. The land is beautiful beyond words with prairies and forests of fruit-trees, with gardens of the rarest flowers underfoot and the dome of the bluest of heavens overhead. The people who dwell in that land have named it the Eden of Louisiana."

With these words of cheer they all bestirred themselves and launched their boat once more upon the tranquil surface of the lake. Evening came upon them swiftly for they had slumbered long and the sun soon touched the western horizon, stretching forth his golden wand over the landscape like a magician. Twinkling vapors arose and the sky and water and forest seemed all on fire melting and mingling together in a glory of liquid flame. The boat that floated with dripping oars on the

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motionless water seemed to hang between two skies like a cloud with edges of silver, and Evangeline's heart was touched by the magic spell of her surroundings and the amazing beauty of the scene until her spirit seemed to glow with the same light of love that transfigured the water and the forest and the sky.

Then a mocking-bird began to sing as he swung upon a willow spray that overhung the water, and shook from his little throat such floods of delirious music, such a thrilling and wild melody that all the air and everything that lived in it and even the woods and the waves became silent in order to listen. The Acadians rested on their oars to hear the song, and then with hearts that throbbed with emotion they entered the river Têche that flows through the green Opelousas, and they saw through the amber air of evening a column of smoke rise above the crest of the woodland from a neighboring dwelling, while the sweet sound of a horn and the distant lowing of cattle was borne upon their ears.

### III

THE house that the Acadians had come upon stood near the margin of the river and was overshadowed by mighty oak-trees from which there floated garlands of Spanish moss and mystic mistletoe such as the Druids used to cut with their golden hatchets at Yuletide. It stood secluded and still with a garden of rich and luxuriant flowers surrounding it, filling the air with heavy and delicious perfumes. The dwelling itself was built of timbers that had been hewn out of the cypress-tree and carefully fitted together, with a roof that was large and low, and a broad, roomy veranda supported on slender columns, jutting out toward the river. Its posts and trellis work were wreathed with vines and blossoming roses that attracted the humming-bird and the bee, and at each end of the house dove-cotes had been set up amid the flowers of the garden and endless scenes of rivalry and love-making were conducted there. Everything was silent and the only sign of life was the blue spiral of smoke curling high above the chimney-top that

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had attracted the attention of the Acadian exiles. Then they saw a pathway that ran from the garden through vast groves of oak to the very edge of the limitless prairie into whose sea of flowers the great, golden sun was slowly sinking, while a cluster of trees with a tangled cordage of grape-vines running over them stood squarely in the path of the sun's light like ships with shadowy canvas.

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf of that wide prairie sat a herdsman dressed in deerskin garments, and mounted on a horse with Spanish trappings. The herdsman's face was rugged and brown beneath the wide brim of his sombrero, and he gazed upon the peaceful scene before him with the commanding look of a master. Surrounding him were numberless herds of cattle that grazed at will in the wide, sweet-scented meadows and breathed the moist freshness that floated up from the river to spread itself over all the land. Then the herdsman slowly lifted the horn that hung from his girdle and expanding his broad, deep chest, blew a piercing blast that echoed wild and sweet and far through the damp and quiet evening. At the sound the long, white horns of the cattle rose from the waving grass and the herds rushed bellowing over the prairie, and suddenly, as the herds-



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man turned toward his house, he saw the figures of the maiden and the priest come through the gate of the garden and hasten toward him. When he beheld their faces he sprang from his horse in amazement and ran forward to greet them with extended arms and ejaculations of wonder, and when they looked on his face they were equally amazed, for he was no other than Basil, the blacksmith, strong and rugged as in former days when he had labored at his forge, but with white hair and the grave and assured demeanor of the wealthy land-owner. His welcome was bluff and hearty as he led his guests to an arbor of roses in the garden where they plied him with endless questions and answers, laughing and weeping in turn and embracing each other frequently as they talked. But after a few minutes they became silent and thoughtful, for Gabriel did not come to greet them and dark misgivings and doubts stole over the maiden's heart as she heard no word of him from Basil. At last the blacksmith said with some embarrassment of manner, for he knew what a bitter disappointment lay in his words: "Tell me, dear friends, if you came by the Atchafalaya did not you meet with my Gabriel's boat on the lakes or bayous? It seems impossible that you



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could have passed each other unawares, for he departed only this morning and cannot have failed to cross your path in his journey.”

A shadow came over Evangeline’s face at his words and the bright tears stood in her eyes.

“Gone? Is Gabriel gone?” she said with a trembling voice, and all at once her overburdened heart gave way and she wept bitterly, resting her head on Basil’s shoulder.

Then the kind-hearted blacksmith said with a voice that grew merry with his own words of encouragement:

“Come, my dear child, be of good cheer, for to-morrow before sunrise we will follow and overtake him. The foolish boy left me all alone with my herds and horses, declaring that he could no longer bear this quiet existence. He was always thinking of you, Evangeline, and speaking of nothing but his troubles and his grief concerning you, until he became so wearisome to all the men and maidens hereabouts, so tedious even to me, his father, that I thought it best to send him to the town of Adayes to trade for mules with the Spaniards. From there he will follow the Indian trails to the Ozark Mountains and hunt for furs in the forest and trap beaver on

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the rivers. But keep a stout heart for he is not yet far away and the fates and the streams themselves are working against him. To-morrow we will pursue the fugitive lover and bring him back to his prison.”

As he spoke there was heard the sound of joyful voices, and up from the river-bank came the boisterous Acadians, carrying Michael, the old fiddler, in their arms. The merry old man had lived for many months beneath the roof of Basil like a god on Mount Olympus, having no other care in the whole world than dispensing music to mortals and gladdening the hearts of all his neighbors. Michael had become famous far and wide for his silver locks and his marvelous fiddle that could set people to dancing against their will and the Acadians shouted in joy as they bore him upon their shoulders, crying: “Long live Michael, our brave Acadian minstrel!” lifting him even higher as they shouted. Evangeline and Father Felician started forward to greet him while Basil hailed his former comrades and friends with hilarious joy, shouting with laughter as he embraced the mothers and daughters all around and clapping the men so stoutly on the shoulders that they staggered and almost fell beneath his blows. The Acadians wondered greatly

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at the wealth of the former blacksmith, the extent of his lands, his many herds and the patriarchal demeanor that had come over him. But they wondered still more at his tales of the rich, stoneless soil and the tropical climate there, and the vast prairies where numberless herds ran wild over the land and belonged to whoever would take the trouble to go and capture them. As the exiles listened to him, observing how he had prospered, there was a feeling almost of gladness in their hearts because they had been driven from their native county into such a land of plenty, and each one privately resolved that he would go and do as Basil had done and become equally wealthy with him. Talking and laughing together they ascended the steps of his house and crossed the wide veranda, entering the hallway where his supper was prepared against his late return and where they rested and feasted together in the utmost happiness.

The hour was late and darkness soon descended over the feast while everything out-of-doors became utterly silent and the moon and the brilliant stars illumined the landscape with silver, but brighter than these gleamed the faces of the friends gathered about the blacksmith's board as the glimmering lamps were lighted and brought

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into the hall. Then from his place at the head of the table, honest Basil poured forth his heart and his wine in equal profusion and when the feast was ended he lit his pipe and smoked the sweet tobacco of the south, blowing the fragrant smoke about him in great clouds as he had done at Benedict's fireside in former years. And his guests still tasted his wine and smiled with gladness as they looked on him until he rose and addressed them.

"Welcome, friends," he shouted, "you who have been so long both friendless and homeless—welcome to a home that is perhaps even better than the old one. For here no hungry winter chills our blood nor does a flinty ground provoke the farmer's wrath. The plowshare runs through the soil as smoothly as a keel through the water and the orange-trees are in blossom winter and summer alike. Here, too, the grass grows taller in a single night than in a whole Canadian summer and numberless herds of cattle run wild and unclaimed on the prairie for you to take as you desire them. Land is to be had for the asking and whole forests of timber are waiting for you to hew them into barns and houses. When your dwellings are once built and your fields are yellow with ripening harvests no King George of Eng-

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land shall drive you away from your homes, burning your houses and barns and stealing your crops and cattle."

The brawny smith became more and more angry as he called to the minds of his guests the wrongs that the English had worked upon them, and with his final words he brought his huge fist down on the table with such a crash that the dishes jumped from the boards and the guests were greatly startled. Father Felician paused in amazement with a pinch of snuff half-way to his nostrils, and Basil, half ashamed as he met the calm glance of the priest, assumed a gentler manner and continued speaking with a milder and gayer note in his voice: "But mark you, my friends, beware of the fever in this country, for it is strong and dangerous, not like that of our colder Acadian climate, to be cured by wearing a spider around one's neck in a nutshell!"

The Acadians burst into laughter at this warning and the memories it awakened among them, and in the midst of their merriment there came the sound of voices from the doorway and the tramp of feet on the outer stairs and broad veranda. The neighboring Creoles and small Acadian planters had come at Basil's summons to



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greet the newcomers, and their glad voices rang to the ceiling as they beheld the assembled company. Friend clasped friend in his arms and those that had formerly been as strangers to one another became friends on that instant, for the joy of meeting their countrymen in exile proved to have binding power upon them. While they rejoiced together the sound of music came from the neighboring hall where Michael had picked up his fiddle and bestirred himself in his business, playing with such a lilt and rhythm that the feet of the entire company seemed to move of their own accord and further speech became impossible. Away they whirled to the dizzy dance like happy children, forgetting everything except the strains of the maddening music that drove them on as in a dream to ceaseless motion, and they danced and whirled with beaming eyes and the rush of fluttering garments.

In the meantime the priest and Basil sat apart from the joyous company, conversing of former times and the prospects of their future life in the new land, while Evangeline stood regarding them as in a trance with memories both sweet and sad arising in her heart as she saw them together. She believed that in the midst of Michael's music she



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could hear the sounding of the sea as it swept the shores of Minas Basin and she thought of her father's lonely grave at the edge of the ocean. Sadness came upon her until she was forced to leave the company unnoticed and steal into the garden to be alone. The night was strangely beautiful and the moon gleaming above the black wall of the forest tipped its edges with liquid silver and cast a pearly light upon the trees. Here and there it flashed from the quiet river like the tender thoughts of love that fall at times upon the darkest and most saddened spirits, and the flowers of the gardens seemed to pour forth odors that were at once their prayers and their confessions. But the heart and spirit of Evangeline were filled with a fragrance even greater than that of the flowers, and the calm, magical moonlight seemed to flood her soul with nameless longings. She passed along the garden path to the shade of the large oak-trees on the edge of the prairie and she gazed on the vast expanse of meadow veiled in a haze of silver and gemmed with fireflies that gleamed through the mist as they floated away in infinite numbers. The bright stars were shining over the head of the maiden and her soul wandered forth alone between the stars and the prairie.

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Reaching out her arms as though she would embrace her lover, she cried aloud: "Oh, Gabriel, my dear one, how often have your feet trodden this very path and your eyes beheld the woodlands that surround me now. Beneath the tree where I stand you must have lain down many a time to rest after your labor and to dream of me as you slumbered. When may my eyes behold you and my arms be folded about you? Why does not your voice reach me now and why may not I see you when you are so near to me?"

Sudden and loud the note of a whippoorwill sounded like a flute among the trees and floated into silence. A gentle wind stirred the branches of the forest and the oak-trees whispered "Patience" from caverns of darkness in the woodland, while the moonlit meadow seemed to sigh in answer. Evangeline returned to the house of Basil with the new hope burning within her that on the next day her party might overtake the boat of Gabriel among the bayous.

Just as the sun rose Basil and Evangeline descended to the river's brink where the boatmen were already waiting for them.

"Farewell," cried Father Felician from the doorway,

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“See that you bring back the Prodigal Son safe and sound as well as the Foolish Virgin who slept when the bridegroom was coming.”

“Farewell,” said Evangeline with a smile at the priest’s words, and the boat darted up the river in the sunlight, following swiftly the flight of him who was speeding before them like a dead leaf blown by the blast of fate over the wide desert. They found no trace of Gabriel that day or the day following and they searched for weary months through a wild and desolate country without success. At last they came to the little Spanish town of Adayes, spent and travel-worn, only to learn with bitter grief that Gabriel had left the village the day before they reached it and, with horses and companions, had taken to the trackless prairie where there was but scanty hope of finding him.

#### IV

**F**AR in the west there lay what was then a wilderness where the mountains lift their lofty summits through eternal snows and where the mighty rivers of the Oregon and the Walleway and the Owyhee flow through deep and jagged valleys still further to the westward. From the eastern slope of these mountains the Nebraska dashes through the Sweet-water valley with a swift and devious course, and numberless torrents roll to south, descending to the ocean with eternal sound like the chords of a mighty harp in loud and solemn vibrations. Beautiful prairies lie between these streams, bright with the wild rose and the purple amorphas, and over them wandered herds of buffalo and packs of wolves and droves of riderless horses. There too were encountered the winds that have become weary with their travels and the blighting prairie fires that rolled on their furious courses, and there the scattered tribes of the children of Ishmael, the cruel and savage Indians, once stained the desert with blood while the vulture wheeled on majestic pinions above

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their terrible war-trails like the soul of some implacable chieftain slaughtered in battle. Here and there arose columns of smoke from the camps of savage marauders, and here and there in silent groves on the margin of rushing streams the grim, taciturn bear descended from the mountains to dig for roots by the edge of the water.

Such was the land at the base of the Ozark Mountains where Gabriel and his companions entered, and day after day Evangeline and Basil followed in his flying footsteps. Sometimes they saw or thought they saw the smoke of his camp-fire on the distant plain, but when they reached the spot only ashes and embers were to be found. And yet, although they were sad at heart and their bodies were weary with their travels, Hope still guided them onward like the magic *Fata Morgana* with her lakes of light or like the *Will-o'-the-Wisp* that retreated vanishing before them.

One evening they were sitting by their fire when an Indian woman entered their little camp, and on her face were traces of great sorrow and of equally great patience. She was a Shawnee woman, returning to her own tribe from the distant hunting-grounds of the cruel Comanches who had murdered her Canadian husband. The hearts of



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the Acadians were touched as she told her story and they gave her a friendly welcome and endeavored to quiet her grief with words of sympathy and kindness. But not until the evening meal of buffalo meat was ended and Basil and his companions had wrapped themselves in their blankets to sleep in the flickering firelight, did she tell to Evangeline the complete story of her love with all its pains and reverses. Seated at the door of the maiden's tent she spoke in a sweet, low voice with all the charm of an Indian accent, and the maiden wept to hear her and to know that another beside herself had loved deeply and been disappointed. But although Evangeline's soul was moved to the utmost depths of pity and womanly compassion she could not refrain from rejoicing that another sufferer was near her who would completely understand the story of her love, and when the Indian woman ceased speaking, the maiden in her turn spoke of Gabriel and of her own sorrows and disasters.

It seemed that the Indian read in Evangeline's story something that the maiden herself could not behold in it, something of strange significance prophesying further disaster, for she sat mute with wonder as she listened and when the tale was ended remained silent as though some



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mysterious horror passed through her brain and prevented her from speaking. At last, however, she found words to tell Evangeline the story of Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who won and wedded a maiden only to melt away in the sunshine so that his bride never beheld him again although she searched far and wide in the forest. The Indian woman told this story in a sweet, low voice that sounded like an incantation, and when her tale was ended she told one equally strange of the beautiful maiden named Lilinau who was wooed by a phantom that came in the twilight to her father's lodge amid the pine-trees and whispered to her with a voice like that of the evening wind until she followed his green and waving plume through the forest and was never seen again. As Evangeline listened to the low voice it seemed to her that all the country surrounding her was bewitched and that the Indian woman was no other than the enchantress who could cast a spell over mountain and meadow and woodland by the sound of her strange voice. A secret, subtle sense of horror crept into the maiden's heart as a cold and poisonous snake creeps into the nest of a swallow. It was no earthly fear, but a breath from the land of spirits that floated

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in the night air until Evangeline believed that like the maiden of the legend, she herself was pursuing a phantom and would never again return to her own people. With this thought she went to sleep to dream of Gabriel and the fear and ghostly images vanished in her dream.

Early the next morning the journey was continued and the Shawnee woman said as they traveled in company, "On the western slope of these mountains the Black Robe chief of the Mission dwells in his little village and teaches the Indians many things, telling them of Mary and Jesus until their hearts leap with joy and pain as they hear him."

"Let us go there," said Evangeline, with a sudden hope glowing within her, "let us hasten to the mission for I truly believe that good tidings are awaiting us there."

They turned their horses in the direction that the Indian woman pointed out to them, and just at sunset they heard the murmur of voices behind the spur of a mountain. A green and broad meadow lay at its base and on the bank of a river they beheld the tents of the Jesuit mission and saw the Black Robe chief kneeling with his children in prayer beneath a gigantic oak-tree

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that stood in the midst of the village. High on the trunk of the tree was fastened a crucifix and the agonized face of the Saviour gazed on the kneeling multitude. For the tree was the Mission's chapel and the sound of hymns and the chant of vespers arose through the arches of its leafy roof to echo from the mountains.

The travelers approached with uncovered heads and knelt with the others on the grass to join in the evening prayer. When it was finished, and the benediction had fallen from the lips of the priest like seed from the hands of the sower, the reverend father advanced to meet the strangers and to bid them welcome. When they answered him he smiled with gladness to hear the sound of his native tongue so far in the wilderness and he led them with kind words and greetings into his wigwam where he seated them on mats and skins and brought them corn and his own water gourd wherewith to break their hunger and slake their thirst. Their story was soon told and the priest answered them, saying solemnly: "It was not six days ago that Gabriel, seated on the very mat where the maiden now reposes told me this same sad tale with his own lips. Then he arose and continued his journey onward."

## THE STORY OF EVANGELINE

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The voice of the Jesuit father was soft and gentle and he spoke with compassionate kindness; but his words were bitter in the ears of Evangeline, falling on her heart as the snowflakes fall on the nest that the birds have deserted in the autumn to make their journey southward.

"He has gone far to the north," the priest continued. "but he intends to return to the Mission in the autumn when his hunting trip is ended."

"Then let me remain with you until he comes," said Evangeline in a voice of quiet patience. "Let me stay where I am and cease my journey, for my soul is sad and afflicted."

This seemed wise and well to all of them, and Evangeline remained with the Black Robe father, while Basil, arising early the next morning with his Indian guides and his companions, departed to the south whence he had come.

Slowly the days succeeded one another and grew into weeks and months. The fields of maize that were springing in green shoots from the ground when Evangeline came to the Mission as a stranger, lifted their slender shafts above her head and bowed with ripening grain. Then the corn was husked in the golden and mellow au-

## THE STORY OF EVANGELINE

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tumn and the maidens blushed at each blood-red ear that told them some lover was on his way to woo them, while at every crooked ear they laughed and called it a thief in the cornfield.

But even the red ears of corn brought no lover to Evangeline, who drooped with sadness day after day, although the priest exhorted her to be patient.

“Only have sufficient faith,” said he, “and your prayer will be answered. Look upon this delicate and fragile plant that lifts its stem from the grass. See how its leaves all point to the north as true as a magnet. It is the compass flower that God has placed here to direct the footsteps of the traveler over the pathless waste of the infinite desert. Brighter flowers may blossom before him, but this alone can guide him. Faith is the compass flower of man’s soul, and only through the light of faith may the pathway of the spirit be illumined.”

In mockery, as it seemed, of the priest’s words the autumn passed and winter also—yet Gabriel did not come. Spring returned to the land and the robin and bluebird sang once more in the thicket, yet he still remained far away. But when the burning summer was on the land a rumor came to the ears of Evangeline that



## THE STORY OF EVANGELINE

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Gabriel had made his camp on the bank of the Saginaw river far to the north, and taking guides and bidding the priest a sad farewell she left the Mission and sought the lakes of the St. Lawrence. When she reached the Saginaw she found the cabin of her lover, but Gabriel had left it long before and it had fallen into ruins.

Years of sadness went their way and still Evangeline continued in her fruitless search, and she was seen in the most distant and inaccessible places. Now she would appear in the tents of the Moravian missions and again she could be found in the turbulent camps and battlefields of striving armies. Sometimes she lived in secluded hamlets and sometimes in towns or thriving cities, coming like a phantom and passing on to be forgotten. She was young and beautiful when she began her search and her face was bright with hope and fearlessness, but every year stole something away from her beauty, and gloom and shadow were marked more deeply on her countenance. Then faint streaks of gray began to show above her forehead like the dawn of another life, shining in her hair as first wan signs of morning shine in the eastern sky.



## V

**I**N the delightful land that is washed by the waters of the River Delaware and that guards the name of the apostle, William Penn, there stands on the bank of the river the city of Philadelphia that Penn himself once founded. There the air is soft and filled with balm and the streets reëcho in their names those of the trees of the forest as though they sought to appease the Dryads of the woods whose haunts they had invaded. This was the place where Evangeline was set ashore when she was taken an exile from her native country, and here the aged notary, René Leblanc, had breathed his last with only one of all his hundred descendants at his side. Something about that peaceful city with its friendly streets and air of pervading quiet spoke to the banished maiden and made her feel that she was not a stranger there. Her ear was pleased with the homely speech of the Quakers, with its "Thee" and "Thou," for it brought to her mind her bygone home in Acadia, just as their simple and kindly manners made her think of her former village neighbors in Grand-Pré.

## THE STORY OF EVANGELINE

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So, when her fruitless search for Gabriel was ended after many weary years, Evangeline went to the city of William Penn to make her home. As the maiden had grown older her sadness had departed, and although she was still separated from her lover his image remained in all the splendor of its youth within her heart and his long absence that seemed like that of death itself made that image only the more beautiful. Time did not enter into her thoughts of him and the passing years seemed to have no power to weaken her memory and her love, for Gabriel had become to her as one who was dead, not absent, and her sorrow taught her the double lesson of patience and devotion to others than herself. She forgot her grief in doing kindness and good deeds to the unfortunate and she lived for many years as a Sister of Mercy frequenting the wretched dwellings of the city where sorrow and distress and want concealed themselves from the sunlight and where hunger and disease languished among the poor in neglected garrets. Night after night when the city was asleep and the watchman shouted through the deserted streets his cry that all was well, he could see the light of Evangeline's taper high in some lonely window where

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she ministered to the sick and made her watch by the bedside of some forlorn and afflicted person, and morning after morning when dawn was gray upon the roofs and the German farmers were plodding into town to sell their flowers and fruits at the market-place he would meet with her pale, meek face as she returned from her midnight vigil.

Then it came to pass that a terrible pestilence befell the city, foretold by many strange and wonderful signs, chiefly by flocks of wild pigeons that darkened the sky in their flight and held nothing in their craws but a single acorn. Death walked abroad in the streets and rich and poor perished together, for wealth had no power to bribe nor beauty to charm the dread disease that slew men, women and children at random and in terrible numbers. But while the rich could die in their own homes, the poor were compelled to creep into the almshouse that stood in the city suburbs in the midst of meadows and woodlands. And there, night after night, came Evangeline, the Sister of Mercy, and the dying looked up into her face, thinking to behold upon it such gleams of heavenly light as artists love to paint above the brows of saints and apostles, for it seemed to the per-

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ishing poor folk that Evangeline also was a saint with eyes like the lamps of the celestial city that their spirits hoped soon to enter.

One Sunday morning Evangeline walked through the deserted and silent streets and entered the door of the almshouse, pausing on her way to gather bunches of flowers from the garden so that the dying might rejoice for the last time in their fragrance and beauty. She was mounting the stairs with the flowers in her hands when the chimes from the belfry of Christ Church came to her ear and she heard the sound of the psalms that the congregation was singing. A great calm seemed to fall upon her spirit and something within her said, "At length thy trials are ended." The voice filled her heart with a sweet gladness and there was a fairer light than usual upon her face as she entered the chambers of sickness and moved noiselessly among the zealous and careful attendants, doing a thousand kindly offices and silently closing the eyes of the dead and covering their faces. Many a languid head was lifted as Evangeline entered there and many a dying face turned on its pillow to gaze after her as she passed, for her presence seemed to fall upon the senses of the sufferers as a ray of sunlight falls

## THE STORY OF EVANGELINE

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along the wall of a gloomy prison and approaching death became less terrible when she was near.

All at once, as though arrested by a sudden fear or wonder, she stood still with colorless lips apart while a shudder ran through her frame and the flowers dropped from her fingers. Then she uttered a cry of such terrible anguish that the dying heard it and started up from their pillows. On a pallet before her lay an old man with hair as white as snow and he was dying of the fever. As he lay there in the light of the early morning his face had taken on the form of his earlier manhood and for an instant had become young again as the faces of the dying will often do in the last moment of life. His exhausted spirit was sinking lower and lower into the shades of death when he heard Evangeline's cry and through the hush that followed, the tender whisper, "Oh, Gabriel, my beloved!" came to his fading senses as she lifted him in her arms and pressed her kisses on his lips. Then he beheld as in a dream the sunlit fields and mountains of his former home in Acadia and believed that he was walking there with Evangeline at his side. Tears welled up beneath his eyelids for he knew that it was only a dream, but as he opened his eyes he saw Evangeline





"AND ANON WITH HIS WOODEN SHOES BEAT TIME TO THE MUSIC"

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kneeling by his bedside. Vainly he tried to whisper her name but could not, although his moving lips told her what he sought to say, and the light in his eyes was beautiful to behold until, like a lamp that is blown out by a gust of wind at the casement, it suddenly sank into the darkness of death.

All was ended—the hope and fear and sorrow and heartache that had tortured the maiden for so many years were over at last and forever, and Evangeline as she pressed the lifeless head to her bosom, bowed her own in submission and murmured, “Father, I thank Thee.”

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On the shores of the Acadian coast there linger to this day a few Acadian peasants whose forefathers returned from exile to their native land, and the maidens there still wear their Norman caps and kirtles and repeat by the evening fire Evangeline’s sad story. But Evangeline herself lies at rest with Gabriel under the humble walls of the little Catholic churchyard in the heart of a great city, and no record or headstone remains to tell their sorrowful history.



# EVANGELINE





# EVANGELINE

## A TALE OF ACADIE

1847

**T**HIS is the forest primeval. The murmuring  
pines and the hemlocks,  
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in  
the twilight,  
Stand like Druids of old, with voices sad and prophetic,  
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their  
bosoms.  
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring  
ocean  
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of  
the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts  
that beneath it  
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the  
voice of the huntsman?  
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian  
farmers,—  
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the  
woodlands,

## EVANGELINE

---

Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image  
of heaven?

Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever  
departed!

Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts  
of October

Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far  
o'er the ocean.

Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of  
Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures,  
and is patient,

Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's  
devotion,

List to the mournful tradition still sung by the pines of  
the forest;

List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

## PART THE FIRST

### I

**I**N the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas,  
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-Pré  
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to  
the eastward,  
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.  
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labor incessant,  
Shut out the turbulent tide; but at stated seasons the flood-gates  
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er the meadows.  
West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards and cornfields.  
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away to the northward.  
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the mountains

## EVANGELINE

---

Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty  
Atlantic

Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their station  
descended.

There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian  
village.

Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and  
of chestnut,

Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of  
the Henries.

Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows; and  
gables projecting

Over the basement below protected and shaded the door-  
way.

There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when brightly  
the sunset

Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes on the  
chimneys,

Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and in  
kirtles

Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning the  
golden

## EVANGELINE

---

Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles within  
doors

Mingled their sound with the whirl of the wheels and the  
songs of the maidens.

Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and the  
children

Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to bless  
them.

Reverend walked he among them; and up rose matrons  
and maidens,

Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate  
welcome.

Then came the laborers home from the field, and serenely  
the sun sank

Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the  
belfry

Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the  
village

Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense as-  
cending,

Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and  
contentment.

## EVANGELINE

---

Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers,—

Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were they free from

Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics.

Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their windows;

But their dwellings were open as day and the hearts of the owners;

There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer the Basin of Minas,

Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand-Pré,

Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him, directing his household,

Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride of the village.

Stalwart and stately in form was the man of seventy winters;



## EVANGELINE

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Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with  
snowflakes;

White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as  
brown as the oak-leaves.

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen sum-  
mers.

Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn  
by the wayside,

Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown  
shade of her tresses!

Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in  
the meadows.

When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at noon-  
tide

Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth was the  
maiden!

Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the bell  
from its turret

Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest with his  
hyssop

Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon  
them,

## EVANGELINE

---

Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet of  
beads and her missal,  
Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue, and the  
earrings.  
Brought in the olden time from France, and since, as an  
heirloom,  
Handed down from mother to child, through long generations.  
But a celestial brightness—a more ethereal beauty—  
Shone on her face and encircled her form, when, after  
confession,  
Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction  
upon her.  
When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music.

Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the house of the  
farmer  
Stood on the side of a hill commanding the sea; and a  
shady  
Sycamore grew by the door, with a woodbine wreathing  
around it.

## EVANGELINE

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Rudely carved was the porch, with seats beneath; and a  
    footpath

Led through an orchard wide, and disappeared in the  
    meadow.

Under the sycamore-tree were hives overhung by a pent-  
    house,

Such as the traveler sees in regions remote by the road-  
    side,

Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed image of  
    Mary.

Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was the well with  
    its moss-grown

Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a trough for the  
    horses.

Shielding the house from storms, on the north, were the  
    barns and the farmyard.

There stood the broad-wheeled wains and the antique  
    plows and the harrows;

There were the folds for the sheep; and there, in his  
    feathered seraglio,

Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock, with  
    the selfsame

Voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent Peter.

## EVANGELINE

---

Bursting with hay were the barns, themselves a village.

In each one

Far o'er the gable projected a roof of thatch; and a staircase,

Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the odorous corn-loft.

There too the dove-cote stood, with its meek and innocent inmates

Murmuring ever of love; while above in the variant breezes

Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world, the farmer of Grand-Pré

Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline governed his household.

Many a youth, as he knelt in the church and opened his missal,

Fixed his eyes upon her, as the saint of his deepest devotion;

Happy was he who might touch her hand or the hem of her garment!

## EVANGELINE

---

Many a suitor came to her door, by the darkness be-  
friended,

And as he knocked and waited to hear the sound of her  
footsteps,

Knew not which beat the louder, his heart or the knocker  
of iron;

Or at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint of the village,  
Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the dance as he  
whispered

Hurried words of love, that seemed a part of the music.  
But, among all who came, young Gabriel only was wel-  
come;

Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the blacksmith,  
Who was a mighty man in the village, and honored of  
all men;

For since the birth of time, throughout all ages and na-  
tions,

Has the craft of the smith been held in repute by the  
people.

Basil was Benedict's friend. Their children from earli-  
est childhood

Grew up together as brother and sister; and Father Feli-  
cian,

## EVANGELINE

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Priest and pedagogue both in the village, had taught  
    them their letters  
Out of the selfsame book, with the hymns of the church  
    and the plain-song.  
But when the hymn was sung, and the daily lesson completed,  
Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of Basil the blacksmith.  
There at the door they stood, with wondering eyes to  
    behold him  
Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the horse as a plaything,  
Nailing the shoe in its place; while near him the tire of  
    the cart-wheel  
Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a circle of cinders.  
Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the gathering  
    darkness  
Bursting with light seemed the smithy, through every  
    cranny and crevice,  
Warm by the forge within they watched the laboring  
    bellows,  
And as its panting ceased, and the sparks expired in the  
    ashes,



## EVANGELINE

---

Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns going into the  
chapel.

Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the swoop of the  
eagle,

Down the hillside bounding, they glided away o'er the  
meadow.

Oft in the barns they climbed to the populous nests on  
the rafters,

Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous stone, which the  
swallow

Brings from the shore of the sea to restore the sight of  
its fledglings;

Lucky was he who found that stone in the nest of the  
swallow!

Thus passed a few swift years, and they no longer were  
children.

He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the face of  
the morning,

Gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened thought  
into action.

She was a woman now, with the heart and hopes of a  
woman.

## EVANGELINE

---

“Sunshine of Saint Eulalie” was she called; for that was  
the sunshine

Which, as the farmers believed, would load their orchards with apples;

She, too, would bring to her husband’s house delight and  
abundance,

Filling it full of love and the ruddy faces of children.

## II

Now had the season returned, when the nights grow  
colder and longer,  
And the retreating sun the sign of the Scorpion enters.  
Birds of passage sailed through the leaden air from the  
ice-bound,  
Desolate northern bays to the shores of tropical islands.  
Harvests were gathered in; and wild with the winds of  
September  
Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old with  
the angel.  
All the signs foretold a winter long and inclement.  
Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had hoarded their  
honey  
Till the hives overflowed; and the Indian hunters as-  
serted  
Cold would the winter be, for thick was the fur of the  
foxes.  
Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed that  
beautiful season,

## EVANGELINE

---

Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer of  
All-Saints!

Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and  
the landscape

Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.  
Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless heart  
of the ocean

Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in har-  
mony blended.

Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the  
farmyards,

Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of  
pigeons,

All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and  
the great sun

Looked with the eye of love through the golden vapors  
around him;

While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet and yel-  
low,

Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering tree of  
the forest

Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned with  
mantles and jewels.

## EVANGELINE

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Now recommenced the reign of rest and affection and stillness.

Day with its burden and heat had departed, and twilight descending

Brought back the evening star to the sky, and the herds to the homestead.

Pawing the ground they came, and resting their necks on each other,

And with their nostrils distended inhaling the freshness of evening.

Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful heifer,

Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon that waved from her collar,

Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection.

Then came the shepherd back with his bleating flock from the seaside,

Where was their favorite pasture. Behind them followed the watch-dog,

Patient, full of importance, and grand in the pride of his instinct,

## EVANGELINE

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Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and superbly  
Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the stragglers;  
Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept; their protector,  
When from the forest at night, through the starry silence the wolves howled.  
Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains from the marshes,  
Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its odor.  
Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their manes and their fetlocks,  
While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and ponderous saddles,  
Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with tassels of crimson,  
Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks heavy with blossoms.  
Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and yielded their udders  
Unto the milkmaid's hand; whilst loud and in regular cadence



## EVANGELINE

---

Into the sounding pails the foaming streamlets descended.

Lowling of cattle and peals of laughter were heard in the farmyard,

Echoed back by the barns. Anon they sank into stillness;

Heavily closed, with a jarring sound, the valves of the barn-doors,

Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a season was silent.

Indoors, warm by the wide-mouthed fireplace, idly the farmer

Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched how the flames and the smoke wreaths

Struggled together like foes in a burning city. Behind him,

Nodding and mocking along the wall, with gestures fantastic,

Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.

Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair

## EVANGELINE

---

Laughed in the flickering light, and the pewter plates  
on the dresser

Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the  
sunshine.

Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christ-  
mas,

Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before  
him

Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian  
vineyards.

Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline  
seated,

Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner be-  
hind her.

Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent  
shuttle,

While the monotonous drone of the wheel, like the drone  
of a bagpipe,

Followed the old man's song, and united the fragments  
together.

As in a church, when the chant of the choir at intervals  
ceases,

## EVANGELINE

---

Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the priest  
at the altar,  
So, in each pause of the song, with measured motion the  
clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps heard, and, suddenly lifted,  
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door swung back on  
its hinges.  
Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it was Basil the  
blacksmith,  
And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who was with  
him.  
“Welcome!” the farmer exclaimed, as their footsteps  
paused on the threshold,  
“Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come, take thy place on  
the settle  
Close by the chimney-side, which is always empty without thee;  
Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and the box of  
tobacco;  
Never so much thyself art thou as when through the  
curling

## EVANGELINE

---

Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy friendly and jovial  
face gleams

Round and red as the harvest moon through the mist of  
the marshes."

Then, with a smile of content, thus answered Basil the  
blacksmith,

Taking with easy air the accustomed seat by the fire-  
side:—

"Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever thy jest and thy  
ballad!

Ever in cheerfullest mood art thou, when others are filled  
with

Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin before them.  
Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst picked up a  
horseshoe."

Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that Evangeline  
brought him,

And with a coal from the embers had lighted, he slowly  
continued:—

"Four days now are passed since the English ships at  
their anchors

Ride in the Gaspereau's mouth, with their cannon pointed  
against us.

## EVANGELINE

---

What their design may be is unknown; but all are commanded

On the morrow to meet in the church, where his Majesty's mandate

Will be proclaimed as law in the land. Alas! in the meantime

Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of the people."

Then made answer the farmer:—"Perhaps some friendlier purpose

Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps the harvests in England

By the untimely rains or untimelier heat have been blighted,

And from our bursting barns they would feed their cattle and children."

"Not so thinketh the folk in the village," said, warmly, the blacksmith,

Shaking his head, as in doubt; then, heaving a sigh, he continued:—

"Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau Séjour, nor Port Royal.

Many already have fled to the forest, and lurk on its outskirts,

## EVANGELINE

---

Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious fate of to-morrow.

Arms have been taken from us, and warlike weapons of all kinds;

Nothing is left but the blacksmith's sledge and the scythe of the mower."

Then with a pleasant smile made answer the jovial farmer:—

"Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our flocks and our cornfields,

Safer within these peaceful dikes, besieged by the ocean,  
Than were our fathers in forts, besieged by the enemy's cannon.

Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night may no shadow of sorrow

Fall on this house and hearth; for this is the night of the contract.

Built are the house and the barn. The merry lads of the village

Strongly have built them and well; and, breaking the glebe round about them,

Filled the barn with hay, and the house with food for a twelvemonth.



## EVANGELINE

---

René Leblanc will be here anon, with his papers and ink-horn.

Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the joy of our children?"

As apart by the window she stood, with her hand in her lover's,

Blushing Evangeline heard the words that her father had spoken,

And as they died on his lips the worthy notary entered.

### III

Bent like a laboring oar, that toils in the surf of the  
ocean,  
Bent, but not broken, by age was the form of the notary  
public;  
Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss of the maize,  
hung  
Over his shoulders; his forehead was high; and glasses  
with horn-bows  
Sat astride on his nose, with a look of wisdom supernal.  
Father of twenty children was he, and more than a hundred  
Children's children rode on his knee, and heard his great  
watch tick.  
Four long years in the times of the war had he languished  
a captive,  
Suffering much in an old French fort as the friend of  
the English.  
Now, though warier grown, without all guile or suspicion,



"HALFWAY DOWN TO THE SHORE EVANGELINE WAITED IN SILENCE"

—Page 185



## EVANGELINE

---

Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and simple, and  
childlike.

He was beloved by all, and most of all by the children;  
For he told them tales of the Loup-garou in the forest,  
And of the goblin that came in the night to water the  
horses,

And of the white Létiche, the ghost of a child who un-  
christened

Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the chambers of  
children;

And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked in the stable,  
And how the fever was cured by a spider shut up in a  
nutshell,

And of the marvelous powers of four-leaved clover and  
horseshoes,

With whatsoever else was writ in the lore of the village.  
Then up rose from his seat by the fireside Basil the black-  
smith,

Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and slowly extending  
his right hand,

“Father Leblanc,” he exclaimed, “thou hast heard the  
talk in the village,

## EVANGELINE

---

And, perchance, canst tell us some news of these ships  
and their errand."

Then with modest demeanor made answer the notary  
public,—

"Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet am never the  
wiser;

And what their errand may be I know not better than  
others.

Yet am I not of those who imagine some evil intention  
Brings them here, for we are at peace; and why then mo-  
lest us?"

"God's name!" shouted the hasty and somewhat irascible  
blacksmith;

"Must we in all things look for the how, and the why,  
and the wherefore?"

Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of the  
strongest!"

But, without heeding his warmth, continued the notary  
public,—

"Man is unjust, but God is just; and finally justice  
Triumphs; and well I remember a story, that often con-  
soled me,



## EVANGELINE

---

When as a captive I lay in the old French fort at Port  
Royal."

This was the old man's favorite tale, and he loved to  
repeat it

When his neighbors complained that any injustice was  
done them.

"Once in an ancient city, whose name I no longer re-  
member,

Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue of Justice  
Stood in the public square, upholding the scales in its  
left hand,

And in its right a sword, as an emblem that justice pre-  
sided

Over the laws of the land, and the hearts and homes of  
the people.

Even the birds had built their nests in the scales of the  
balance,

Having no fear of the sword that flashed in the sunshine  
above them.

But in the course of time the laws of the land were cor-  
rupted;

Might took the place of right, and the weak were op-  
pressed, and the mighty

## EVANGELINE

---

Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced in a noble-  
man's palace

That a necklace of pearls was lost, and ere long a sus-  
picion

Fell on an orphan girl who lived as maid in the house-  
hold.

She, after form of trial condemned to die on the scaffold,  
Patiently met her doom at the foot of the statue of Jus-  
tice.

As to her Father in Heaven her innocent spirit ascended,  
Lo! o'er the city a tempest rose; and the bolts of the  
thunder

Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in wrath from its  
left hand

Down on the pavement below the clattering scales of  
the balance,

And in the hollow thereof was found the nest of a mag-  
pie,

Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of pearls was  
inwoven."

Silenced, but not convinced, when the story was ended,  
the blacksmith

## EVANGELINE

---

Stood like a man who fain would speak, but findeth no  
language;  
All his thoughts were congealed into lines on his face, as  
the vapors  
Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-panes in the  
winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp on the ta-  
ble,  
Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard with home-  
brewed  
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its strength in the  
village of Grand-Pré;  
While from his pocket the notary drew his papers and  
inkhorn,  
Wrote with a steady hand the date and the age of the  
parties,  
Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of sheep and in  
cattle.  
Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and well were  
completed,  
And the great seal of the law was set like a sun on the  
margin.

## EVANGELINE

---

Then from his leathern pouch the farmer threw on the  
table

Three times the old man's fee in solid pieces of silver;  
And the notary rising, and blessing the bride and the  
bridegroom,

Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank to their wel-  
fare.

Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly bowed and  
departed,

While in silence the others sat and mused by the fireside,  
Till Evangeline brought the draught-board out of its  
corner.

Soon was the game begun. In friendly contention the  
old men

Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful maneuver,  
Laughed when a man was crowned, or a breach was made  
in the king-row.

Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of a window's  
embrasure,

Sat the lovers, and whispered together, beholding the  
moon rise

Over the pallid sea and the silvery mist of the meadows.

## EVANGELINE

---

Silently, one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,  
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the  
angels.

Thus passed the evening away. Anon the bell from  
the belfry  
Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew, and  
straightway  
Rose the guests and departed; and silence reigned in the  
household.  
Many a farewell word and sweet good-night on the door-  
step  
Lingered long in Evangeline's heart, and filled it with  
gladness.  
Carefully then were covered the embers that glowed on  
the hearth-stone,  
And on the oaken stairs resounded the tread of the  
farmer.  
Soon with a soundless step the foot of Evangeline fol-  
lowed.  
Up the staircase moved a luminous space in the dark-  
ness,



## EVANGELINE

---

Lighted less by the lamp than the shining face of the  
maiden.

Silent she passed through the hall, and entered the door  
of her chamber.

Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of white, and  
its clothespress

Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were care-  
fully folded

Linen and woolen stuffs, by the hand of Evangeline  
woven.

This was the precious dower she would bring to her hus-  
band in marriage,

Better than flocks, and herds, being proofs of her skill as  
a housewife.

Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the mellow and ra-  
diant moonlight

Streamed through the windows, and lighted the room,  
till the heart of the maiden

Swelled and obeyed its power, like the tremulous tides  
of the ocean.

Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold, as she stood  
with



## EVANGELINE

---

Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of her  
chamber!

Little she dreamed that below, among the trees of the  
orchard,

Waited her lover and watched for the gleam of her lamp  
and her shadow.

Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times a feeling of  
sadness

Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade of clouds in the  
moonlight

Flitted across the floor and darkened the room for a mo-  
ment.

And as she gazed from the window she saw serenely the  
moon pass

Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star follow her  
footsteps,

As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wandered with  
Hagar!

#### IV

Pleasantly rose next morn the sun on the village of  
Grand-Pré.  
Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the Basin of  
Minas,  
Where the ships, with their wavering shadows, were rid-  
ing at anchor.  
Life had long been astir in the village, and clamorous  
labor  
Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden gates of  
the morning.  
Now from the country around, from the farms and the  
neighboring hamlets,  
Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian peas-  
ants.  
Many a glad good-morrow and jocund laugh from the  
young folk  
Made the bright air brighter, as up from the numerous  
meadows,  
Where no path could be seen but the track of wheels in  
the greensward,

## EVANGELINE

---

Group after group appeared, and joined, or passed on the  
highway.

Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of labor were  
silenced.

Thronged were the streets with people; and noisy groups  
at the house-doors

Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and gossiped to-  
gether.

Every house was an inn, where all were welcomed and  
feasted;

For with this simple people, who lived like brothers to-  
gether,

All things were held in common, and what one had was  
another's.

Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality seemed more  
abundant:

For Evangeline stood among the guests of her father;

Bright was her face with smiles, and words of welcome  
and gladness

Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed the cup as she  
gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of the orchard,

## EVANGELINE

---

Bending with golden fruit, was spread the feast of betrothal.

There in the shade of the porch were the priest and the notary seated;

There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil the blacksmith.

Not far withdrawn from these, by the cider-press and the beehives,

Michael the fiddler was placed, with the gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.

Shadow and light from the leaves alternately played on his snow-white

Hair, as it waved in the wind, and the jolly face of the fiddler

Glowed like a living coal when the ashes are blown from the embers.

Gaily the old man sang to the vibrant sound of his fiddle,

*Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres*, and *Le Carillon de Dunkerque*,

And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the music. Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the dizzying dances

## EVANGELINE

---

Under the orchard-trees and down the path to the mead-  
ows;

Old folk and young together, and children mingled  
among them.

Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline, Benedict's  
daughter!

Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son of the black-  
smith!

So passed the morning away. And lo! with a sum-  
mons sonorous

Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the meadows  
a drum beat.

Thronged ere long was the church with men. Without,  
in the churchyard,

Waited the women. They stood by the graves, and  
hung on the headstones

Garlands of autumn leaves and evergreens fresh from  
the forest.

Then came the guard from the ships, and marching  
proudly among them

Entered the sacred portal. With loud and dissonant  
clangor

## EVANGELINE

---

Echoed the sound of their brazen drums from ceiling and  
casement,—

Echoed a moment only, and slowly the ponderous portal  
Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited the will of the  
soldiers.

Then up rose their commander, and spake from the steps  
of the altar,

Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals, the royal com-  
mission,

“You are convened this day,” he said, “by his Majesty’s  
orders.

Clement and kind has he been; but how you have an-  
swered his kindness,

Let your own hearts reply! To my natural make and  
my temper

Painful the task is I do, which to you I know must be  
grievous.

Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the will of our  
monarch;

Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and cattle  
of all kinds

Forfeited be to the crown; and that you yourselves from  
this province



## EVANGELINE

---

Be transported to other lands. God grant you may  
    dwell there  
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and peaceable people!  
Prisoners now I declare you; for such is his Majesty's  
    pleasure!"

As, when the air is serene in the sultry solstice of summer,  
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of the  
    hailstones  
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field and shatters  
    his windows,  
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with thatch  
    from the house-roofs,  
Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their inclosures;  
So on the hearts of the people descended the words of the  
    speaker.  
Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder, and  
    then rose  
Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and anger,  
And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed to the  
    doorway.

## EVANGELINE

---

Vain was the hope of escape; and cries and fierce imprecations

Rang through the house of prayer; and high o'er the heads of the others

Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of Basil the blacksmith,

As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the billows.

Flushed was his face and distorted with passion; and wildly he shouted,—

“Down with the tyrants of England! We never have sworn them allegiance!

Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our homes and our harvests!”

More he fain would have said, but the merciless hand of a soldier

Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged him down to the pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry contention,

Lo! the door of the chancel opened, and Father Felician Entered, with serious mien, and ascended the steps of the altar.

## EVANGELINE

---

Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he awed into  
silence

All that clamorous throng; and thus he spake to his people;

Deep were his tones and solemn; in accents measured  
and mournful

Spake he, as, after the tocsin's alarum, distinctly the  
clock strikes.

“What is this that ye do, my children? what madness  
has seized you?

Forty years of my life have I labored among you, and  
taught you,

Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one another!

Is this the fruits of my toils, of my vigils and prayers  
and privations?

Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of love and forgiveness?

This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and would you  
profane it

Thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing with  
hatred?

Lo! where the crucified Christ from his cross is gazing  
upon you!

## EVANGELINE

---

See! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and holy  
compassion!

Hark! how those lips still repeat the prayer, 'O Father,  
forgive them!'

Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when the wicked  
assail us,

Let us repeat it now, and say, 'O Father, forgive  
them!' "

Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in the hearts of  
his people

Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded that passion-  
ate outbreak;

And they repeated his prayer, and said, "O Father, for-  
give them!"

Then came the evening service. The tapers gleamed  
from the altar.

Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest, and the  
people responded,

Not with their lips alone, but their hearts; and the Ave  
Maria

Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their souls, with  
devotion translated,

## EVANGELINE

---

Rose on the ardor of prayer, like Elijah ascending to  
heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the tidings of ill,  
and on all sides  
Wandered, wailing, from house to house the women and  
children.  
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood, with her  
right hand  
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of the sun, that,  
descending,  
Lighted the village street with mysterious splendor, and  
roofed each  
Peasant's cottage with golden thatch, and emblazoned  
its windows.  
Long within had been spread the snow-white cloth on  
the table;  
There stood the wheaten loaf, and the honey fragrant  
with wild flowers;  
There stood the tankard of ale, and the cheese fresh  
brought from the dairy,  
And at the head of the board the great armchair of the  
farmer.

## EVANGELINE

---

Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's door, as the  
sunset

Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the broad ambrosial meadows.

Ah! on her spirit within a deeper shadow had fallen,  
And from the fields of her soul a fragrance celestial ascended,—

Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and forgiveness, and  
patience!

Then all-forgetful of self, she wandered into the village,  
Cheering with looks and words the disconsolate hearts of  
the women

As o'er the darkening field with lingering steps they departed,

Urged by their household cares, and the weary feet of  
their children.

Down sank the great red sun, and in golden, glimmering  
vapors

Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet descending  
from Sinai.

Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus sounded.



## EVANGELINE

---

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the church Evangeline  
lingered.

All was silent within; and in vain at the door and the  
windows

Stood she, and listened and looked, until, overcome by  
emotion,

“Gabriel!” cried she aloud with tremulous voice; but no  
answer

Came from the graves of the dead, nor the gloomier grave  
of the living.

Slowly at length she returned to the tenantless house of  
her father.

Smoldered the fire on the hearth, on the board stood the  
supper untasted,

Empty and drear was each room, and haunted with phan-  
toms of terror.

Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the floor of her  
chamber.

In the dead of the night she heard the whispering rain  
fall

Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree by the  
window.

## EVANGELINE

---

Keenly the lightning flashed; and the voice of the echoing thunder

Told her that God was in heaven, and governed the world he created!

Then she remembered the tale she had heard of the justice of heaven;

Soothed was her troubled soul, and she peacefully slumbered till morning.

V

Four times the sun had risen and set; and now on the  
fifth day  
Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping maids of the farm-  
house.  
Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mournful pro-  
cession,  
Came from the neighboring hamlets and farms the Aca-  
dian women,  
Driving in ponderous wains their household goods to the  
seashore,  
Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on their  
dwellings,  
Ere they were shut from sight by the winding road and  
the woodland.  
Close at their sides their children ran, and urged on the  
oxen,  
While in their little hands they clasped some fragments  
of playthings.

## EVANGELINE

---

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they hurried; there on  
the sea-beach  
Piled in confusion lay the household goods of the peasants.  
All day long between the shore and the ships did the  
boats ply;  
All day long the wains came laboring down from the  
village.  
Late in the afternoon, when the sun was near to his setting,  
Echoing far o'er the fields came the roll of drums from  
the churchyard.  
Thither the women and children thronged. On a sudden  
the church-doors  
Opened, and forth came the guard, and marching in  
gloomy procession  
Followed the long-prisoned, but patient Acadian farmers.  
Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from their homes  
and their country,  
Sing as they go, and in singing forget they are weary  
and wayworn,

## EVANGELINE

---

So with songs on their lips the Acadian peasants descended

Down from the church to the shore, amid their wives and their daughters.

Foremost the young men came; and, raising together their voices,

Sang they with tremulous lips a chant of the Catholic Missions:—

“Sacred heart of the Saviour! O inexhaustible fountain! Fill our hearts this day with strength and submission and patience!”

Then the old men, as they marched, and the women that stood by the wayside

Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds in the sunshine above them

Mingled their notes therewith, like voices of spirits departed.

Halfway down to the shore Evangeline waited in silence,

Not overcome with grief, but strong in the hour of affliction,—

## EVANGELINE

---

Calmly and sadly waited, until the procession approached  
her,

And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale with emotion.

Tears then filled her eyes, and eagerly running to meet  
him,

Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on his shoulder,  
and whispered,—

“Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we love one another,  
Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mischances may  
happen!”

Smiling she spake these words; then suddenly paused,  
for her father

Saw she slowly advancing. Alas! how changed was his  
aspect!

Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the fire from his  
eye, and his footstep

Heavier seemed with the weight of the weary heart in  
his bosom.

But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped his neck and em-  
braced him,

Speaking words of endearment where words of comfort  
availed not.



## EVANGELINE

---

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth moved on that mournful  
procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of  
embarking.

Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion  
Wives were torn from their husbands, and mothers, too  
late, saw their children

Left on the land, extending their arms, with wildest  
entreaties.

So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,  
While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with her  
father.

Half the task was not done when the sun went down,  
and the twilight

Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the reflu-  
ent ocean

Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-  
beach

Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the slip-  
pery seaweed.

Farther back in the midst of the household goods and the  
wagons,

## EVANGELINE

---

Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after a battle,  
All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels near them,  
Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian farmers.

Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bellowing  
ocean,

Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles, and leaving  
ing

Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of the  
sailors.

Then, as the night descended, the herds returned from  
their pastures;

Sweet was the moist still air with the odor of milk from  
their udders;

Lowling they waited, and long, at the well-known bars  
of the farmyard,—

Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the hand  
of the milkmaid.

Silence reigned in the streets; from the church no Angelus  
sounded,

Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no lights  
from the windows.

## EVANGELINE

---

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires had been  
kindled,  
Built of the drift-wood thrown on the sands from wrecks  
in the tempest.  
Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces were  
gathered,  
Voices of women were heard, and of men, and the crying  
of children.  
Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth in his  
parish,  
Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and blessing and  
cheering,  
Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's desolate sea-  
shore.  
Thus he approached the place where Evangeline sat with  
her father,  
And in the flickering light beheld the face of the old man,  
Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either  
thought or emotion,  
E'en as the face of a clock from which the hands have  
been taken.  
Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to  
cheer him,

## EVANGELINE

---

Vainly offered him food; yet he moved not, he looked  
not, he spake not,

But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flickering fire-  
light.

"*Benedicite!*" murmured the priest, in tones of compas-  
sion.

More he fain would have said, but his heart was full,  
and his accents

Faltered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a child on  
a threshold,

Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful presence  
of sorrow.

Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on the head of the  
maiden,

Raising his eyes, full of tears, to the silent stars that  
above them

Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs and sor-  
rows of mortals,

Then sat he down at her side, and they wept together in  
silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in autumn the  
blood-red



"LOVELY THE MOONLIGHT WAS AS IT GLANCED AND GLEAMED ON THE WATER"  
—Page 206





## EVANGELINE

---

Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and o'er the  
horizon

Titan-like stretches its hundred hands upon mountain  
and meadow,

Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and piling huge shad-  
ows together.

Broader and ever broader it gleamed on the roofs of the  
village,

Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and the ships that lay  
in the roadstead.

Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of flame  
were

Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like the quiv-  
ering hands of a martyr.

Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burning  
thatch, and, uplifting,

Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from a hun-  
dred house-tops

Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of flame inter-  
mingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd on the shore  
and on shipboard.

## EVANGELINE

---

Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in their  
anguish,

“We shall behold no more our homes in the village of  
Grand-Pré!”

Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow in the farm-  
yards,

Thinking the day had dawned; and anon the lowing of  
cattle

Came on the evening breeze, by the barking of dogs in-  
terrupted.

Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles the sleeping  
encampments

Far in the western prairies or forests that skirt the Ne-  
braska,

When the wild horses affrighted sweep by with the speed  
of the whirlwind,

Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes rush to the river.  
Such was the sound that rose on the night, as the herds  
and the horses

Broke through their folds and fences, and madly rushed  
o’er the meadows.

## EVANGELINE

---

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless, the priest  
and the maiden  
Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened and widened  
before them;  
And as they turned at length to speak to their silent com-  
panion,  
Lo! from his seat he had fallen, and stretched abroad on  
the seashore  
Motionless lay his form, from which the soul had de-  
parted.  
Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head, and the  
maiden  
Knelt at her father's side, and wailed aloud in her ter-  
ror.  
Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her head on his  
bosom.  
Through the long night she lay in deep, oblivious slum-  
ber;  
And when she woke from the trance, she beheld a multi-  
tude near her.  
Faces of friends she beheld, that were mournfully gazing  
upon her,

## EVANGELINE

---

Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of saddest compassion.

Still the blaze of the burning village, illumined the landscape,

Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed on the faces around her,

And like the day of doom it seemed to her wavering senses.

Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said to the people,—  
“Let us bury him here by the sea. When a happier season

Brings us again to our homes from the unknown land of our exile,

Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid in the churchyard.”

Such were the words of the priest. And there in haste by the seaside,

Having the glare of the burning village for funeral torches,

But without bell or book, they buried the farmer of Grand-Pré.

And as the voice of the priest repeated the service of sorrow,

## EVANGELINE

---

Lo! with a mournful sound, like the voice of a vast congregation,  
Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with the dirges.  
'Twas the returning tide, that afar from the waste of the ocean,  
With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurrying landward.  
Then recommenced once more the stir and noise of embarking;  
And with the ebb of that tide the ships sailed out of the harbor,  
Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, and the village in ruins.





## PART THE SECOND

### I

**M**ANY a weary year had passed since the burning  
of Grand-Pré,  
When on the falling tide the freighted vessels departed,  
Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into exile,  
Exile without an end, and without an example in story.  
Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Acadians landed;  
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow, when the wind  
from the northeast  
Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken the Banks of  
Newfoundland.  
Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wandered from city  
to city,  
From the cold lakes of the North to sultry Southern  
savannas,—  
From the bleak shores of the sea to the lands where the  
Father of Waters

## EVANGELINE

---

Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags them down to the  
ocean,

Deep in their sands to bury the scattered bones of the  
mammoth.

Friends they sought and homes; and many, despairing,  
heartbroken,

Asked of the earth but a grave, and no longer a friend  
nor a fireside.

Written their history stands on tablets of stone in the  
churchyards.

Long among them was seen a maiden who waited and  
wandered,

Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently suffering all  
things.

Fair was she and young; but, alas! before her extended,  
Dreary and vast and silent, the desert of life, with its  
pathway

Marked by the graves of those who had sorrowed and  
suffered before her,

Passions long extinguished, and hopes long dead and  
abandoned,

As the emigrant's way o'er the Western desert is marked  
by

## EVANGELINE

---

Camp-fires long consumed, and bones that bleach in the  
sunshine.

Something there was in her life incomplete, imperfect,  
unfinished;

As if a morning of June, with all its music and sunshine,  
Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading, slowly de-  
scended

Into the east again, from whence it late had risen.

Sometimes she lingered in towns, till, urged by the fever  
within her,

Urged by a restless longing, the hunger and thirst of the  
spirit,

She would commence again her endless search and en-  
deavor;

Sometimes in churchyards strayed, and gazed on the  
crosses and tombstones,

Sat by some nameless grave, and thought that perhaps  
in its bosom

He was already at rest, and she longed to slumber beside  
him.

Sometimes a rumor, a hearsay, an inarticulate whisper,  
Came with its airy hand to point and beckon her forward.

## EVANGELINE

---

Sometimes she spake with those who had seen her beloved  
and known him,

But it was long ago, in some far-off place or forgotten.  
“Gabriel Lajeunesse!” said they; “Oh, yes! we have seen  
him.

He was with Basil the blacksmith, and both have gone  
to the prairies;

*Coueurs-des-Bois* are they, and famous hunters and  
trappers.”

“Gabriel Lajeunesse!” said others; “Oh, yes! we have  
seen him.

He is a *Voyageur* in the lowlands of Louisiana.”

Then would they say,—“Dear child! why dream and  
wait for him longer?

Are there not other youths as fair as Gabriel? others  
Who have hearts as tender and true, and spirits as loyal?  
Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary’s son, who has loved  
thee

Many a tedious year; come, give him thy hand and be  
happy!

Thou art too fair to be left to braid St. Catherine’s  
tresses.”

## EVANGELINE

---

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely but sadly,—

“I cannot!

Whither my heart has gone, there follows my hand, and  
not elsewhere.

For when the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines  
the pathway,

Many things are made clear, that else lie hidden in dark-  
ness.”

And thereupon the priest, her friend and father-con-  
fessor,

Said, with a smile,—“O daughter! thy God thus speak-  
eth within thee!

Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted;  
If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, return-  
ing

Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full of  
refreshment;

That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the  
fountain.

Patience; accomplish thy labor; accomplish thy work of  
affection!

Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is  
godlike.

## EVANGELINE

---

Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered more  
worthy of heaven!"

Cheered by the good man's words, Evangeline labored  
and waited.

Still in her heart she heard the funeral dirge of the ocean,  
But with its sound there was mingled a voice that whis-  
pered, "Despair not!"

Thus did that poor soul wander in want and cheerless  
discomfort,

Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and thorns of ex-  
istence.

Let me essay, O Muse! to follow the wanderer's foot-  
steps;—

Not through each devious path, each changeful year of  
existence;

But as a traveler follows a streamlet's course through the  
valley:

Far from its margin at times, and seeing the gleam of its  
water

Here and there, in some open space, and at intervals  
only;

Then drawing nearer its banks, through sylvan glooms  
that conceal it,



## EVANGELINE

---

Though he behold it not, he can hear its continuous mur-  
mur;

Happy, at length, if we find the spot where it reaches an  
outlet.

## II

It was the month of May. Far down the Beautiful  
River,  
Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth of the Wabash,  
Into the golden stream of the broad and swift Missis-  
sippi,  
Floated a cumbrous boat, that was rowed by Acadian  
boatmen.  
It was a band of exiles: a raft, as it were, from the ship-  
wrecked  
Nation, scattered along the coast, now floating together,  
Bound by the bonds of a common belief and a common  
misfortune;  
Men and women and children, who, guided by hope or  
by hearsay,  
Sought for their kith and their kin among the few-acred  
farmers  
On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of fair Opelousas.  
With them Evangeline went, and her guide, the Father  
Felician.

## EVANGELINE

---

Onward o'er sunken sands, through a wilderness somber  
with forests,

Day after day they glided adown the turbulent river;  
Night after night, by their blazing fires, encamped on its  
borders.

Now through rushing chutes, among green islands, where  
plume-like

Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests, they swept  
with the current.

Then emerged into broad lagoons, where silvery sand-  
bars

Lay in the stream, and along the whimpling waves of  
their margin,

Shining with snow-white plumes, large flocks of pelicans  
waded.

Level the landscape grew, and along the shores of the  
river,

Shaded by china-trees, in the midst of luxuriant gardens,  
Stood the houses of planters, with negro-cabins and dove-  
cotes.

They were approaching the region where reigns per-  
petual summer,

## EVANGELINE

---

Where through the Golden Coast, and groves of orange  
and citron,

Sweeps with majestic curve the river away to the east-  
ward.

They, too, swerved from their course; and, entering the  
Bayou of Plaquemine,

Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious waters,  
Which, like a network of steel, extended in every direc-  
tion.

Over their heads the towering and tenebrous boughs of  
the cypress

Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses in mid-air  
Waved like banners that hang on the walls of ancient  
cathedrals.

Deathlike the silence seemed, and unbroken, save by the  
herons

Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees returning at sun-  
set,

Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with demoniac  
laughter.

Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and gleamed on  
the water,

## EVANGELINE

---

Gleamed on the columns of cypress and cedar sustaining  
the arches,

Down through whose broken vaults it fell as through  
chinks in a ruin.

Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were all things  
around them;

And o'er their spirits there came a feeling of wonder and  
sadness,—

Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that cannot be  
compassed.

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prai-  
ries,

Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mi-  
mosa,

So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,  
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has  
attained it.

But Evangeline's heart was sustained by a vision, that  
faintly

Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her on through the  
moonlight.

It was the thought of her brain that assumed the shape  
of a phantom.

## EVANGELINE

---

Through those shadowy aisles had Gabriel wandered be-  
fore her,  
And every stroke of the oar now brought him nearer and  
nearer.

Then, in his place, at the prow of the boat, rose one of  
the oarsmen,  
And, as a signal sound, if others like them peradventure  
Sailed on those gloomy and midnight streams, blew a  
blast on his bugle.  
Wild through the dark colonnades and corridors leafy  
the blast rang,  
Breaking the seal of silence, and giving tongues to the  
forest.  
Soundless above them the banners of moss just stirred to  
the music.  
Multitudinous echoes awoke and died in the distance,  
Over the watery floor, and beneath the reverberant  
branches;  
But not a voice replied; no answer came from the dark-  
ness;  
And when the echoes had ceased, like a sense of pain was  
the silence.



## EVANGELINE

---

Then Evangeline slept; but the boatmen rowed through  
the midnight,  
Silent at times, then singing familiar Canadian boat-  
songs,  
Such as they sang of old on their own Acadian rivers.  
And through the night were heard the mysterious sounds  
of the desert,  
Far off, indistinct, as of wave or wind in the forest,  
Mixed with the whoop of the crane and the roar of the  
grim alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged from those  
shades; and before them  
Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the Atchafalaya.  
Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight undulations  
Made by the passing oars, and, resplendent in beauty, the  
lotus  
Lifted her golden crown above the heads of the boatmen.  
Faint was the air with the odorous breath of magnolia  
blossoms,  
And with the heat of noon; and numberless sylvan  
islands,

## EVANGELINE

---

Fragrant and thickly embowered with blossoming hedges  
of roses,

Near to whose shores they glided along, invited to slumber.

Soon by the fairest of these their weary oars were suspended.

Under the boughs of Wachita willows, that grew by the margin,

Safely their boat was moored; and scattered about on the greensward,

Tired with their midnight toil, the weary travelers slumbered.

Over them vast and high extended the cope of a cedar.  
Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-flower and the grape-vine

Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder of Jacob,  
On whose pendulous stairs the angels ascending, descending,

Were the swift humming-birds, that flitted from blossom to blossom.

Such was the vision Evangeline saw as she slumbered beneath it.

## EVANGELINE

---

Filled was her heart with love, and the dawn of an open-  
ing heaven  
Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of regions ce-  
lestial.

Nearer and ever nearer, among the numberless islands,  
Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away o'er the water,  
Urged on its course by the sinewy arms of hunters and  
trappers.

Northward its prow was turned, to the land of the bison  
and beaver.

At the helm sat a youth, with countenance thoughtful  
and careworn.

Dark and neglected locks overshadowed his brow, and  
a sadness

Somewhat beyond his years on his face was legibly writ-  
ten.

Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting, unhappy and  
restless,

Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of self and of sor-  
row.

Swiftly they glided along, close under the lee of the  
island,

## EVANGELINE

---

But by the opposite bank, and behind a screen of pal-  
mettos,  
So that they saw not the boat, where it lay concealed in  
the willows,  
And undisturbed by the dash of their oars, and unseen,  
were the sleepers;  
Angel of God was there none to awaken the slumbering  
maiden.  
Swiftly they glided away, like the shade of a cloud on  
the prairie.  
After the sound of their oars on the tholes had died in  
the distance,  
As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke, and the  
maiden  
Said with a sigh to the friendly priest,—“O Father Feli-  
cian!  
Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel wan-  
ders.  
Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague superstition?  
Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to my  
spirit?”  
Then, with a blush, she added,—“Alas for my credulous  
fancy!

## EVANGELINE

---

Unto ears like thine such words as these have no meaning."

But made answer the reverend man, and he smiled as he answered,—

"Daughter, thy words are not idle; nor are they to me without meaning.

Feeling is deep and still; and the word that floats on the surface

Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where the anchor is hidden.

Therefore trust to thy heart, and to what the world calls illusions.

Gabriel truly is near thee; for not far away to the southward,

On the banks of the Têche, are the towns of St. Maur and St. Martin.

There the long-wandering bride shall be given again to her bridegroom,

There the long-absent pastor regain his flock and his sheepfold.

Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests of fruit-trees;

## EVANGELINE

---

Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest of  
heavens

Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls of the  
forest.

They who dwell there have named it the Eden of Louisiana."

And with these words of cheer they arose and continued their journey.

Softly the evening came. The sun from the western  
horizon

Like a magician extended his golden wand o'er the landscape;

Twinkling vapors arose; and the sky and water and forest

Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted and mingled together.

Hanging between two skies, a cloud with edges of silver,  
Floated the boat, with its dripping oars, on the motionless water.

Filled was Evangeline's heart with inexpressible sweetness.



## EVANGELINE

---

Touched by the magic spell, the sacred fountains of feeling

Glowed with the light of love, as the skies and waters  
around her.

Then from a neighboring thicket the mocking-bird, wildest of singers,

Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o'er the  
water,

Shook from his little throat such floods of delirious music,  
That the whole air and the woods and the waves seemed  
silent to listen.

Plaintive at first were the tones and sad; then soaring to  
madness

Seemed they to follow or guide the revel of frenzied Bacchantes.

Single notes were then heard, in sorrowful, low lamentation;

Till, having gathered them all, he flung them abroad in  
derision,

As when, after a storm, a gust of wind through the tree-tops

Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower on the  
branches.

## EVANGELINE

---

With such a prelude as this, hearts that throbbed with  
emotion,  
Slowly they entered the Têche, where it flows through  
the green Opelousas,  
And through the amber air, above the crest of the wood-  
land,  
Saw the column of smoke that arose from a neighboring  
dwelling;—  
Sounds of a horn they heard, and the distant lowing of  
cattle.

### III

Near to the bank of the river, o'ershadowed by oaks,  
from whose branches  
Garlands of Spanish moss and mystic mistletoe flaunted,  
Such as the Druids cut down with golden hatchets at  
Yule-tide,  
Stood secluded and still, the house of the herdsman. A  
garden  
Girded it round about with a belt of luxuriant blossoms,  
Filling the air with fragrance. The house itself was of  
timbers  
Hewn from the cypress-tree, and carefully fitted together.  
Large and low was the roof; and on slender columns supported,  
Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad and spacious  
veranda,  
Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee, extended around  
it.  
At each end of the house, amid the flowers of the garden,

## EVANGELINE

---

Stationed the dove-cotes were, as love's perpetual symbol,  
Scenes of endless wooing, and endless contentions of rivals.  
Silence reigned o'er the place. The line of shadow and sunshine  
Ran near the tops of the trees; but the house itself was  
in shadow,  
And from its chimney-top, ascending and slowly expanding  
Into the evening air, a thin blue column of smoke rose.  
In the rear of the house, from the garden gate, ran a pathway  
Through the great groves of oak to the skirts of the limitless prairie,  
Into whose sea of flowers the sun was slowly descending.  
Full in his track of light, like ships with shadowy canvas  
Hanging loose from their spars in a motionless calm in the tropics,  
Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cordage of grapevines.

## EVANGELINE

---

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf of the  
prairie,  
Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish saddle and stir-  
rups,  
Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters and doublet of deer-  
skin.  
Broad and brown was the face that from under the Span-  
ish sombrero  
Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the lordly look of its  
master.  
Round about him were numberless herds of kine, that  
were grazing  
Quietly in the meadows, and breathing the vapory fresh-  
ness  
That uprose from the river, and spread itself over the  
landscape.  
Slowly lifting the horn that hung at his side, and expand-  
ing  
Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew a blast, that re-  
sounded  
Wildly and sweet and far, through the still damp air of  
the evening.

## EVANGELINE

---

Suddenly out of the grass the long white horns of the  
cattle

Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse currents of ocean.  
Silent a moment they gazed, then bellowing rushed o'er  
the prairie,

And the whole mass became a cloud, a shade in the dis-  
tance.

Then, as the herdsman turned to the house, through the  
gate of the garden

Saw he the forms of the priest and the maiden advancing  
to meet him.

Suddenly down from his horse he sprang in amazement,  
and forward

Rushed with extended arms and exclamations of wonder;  
When they beheld his face, they recognized Basil, the  
blacksmith.

Hearty his welcome was, as he led his guests to the gar-  
den.

There in an arbor of roses with endless question and  
answer

Gave they vent to their hearts, and renewed their  
friendly embraces,





"THERE IN AN ARBOR OF ROSES"—Page 220



## EVANGELINE

---

Laughing and weeping by turns, or sitting silent and  
thoughtful.

Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not; and now dark doubts  
and misgivings

Stole o'er the maiden's heart; and Basil, somewhat em-  
barrassed,

Broke the silence and said,—“If you came by the At-  
chafalaya,

How have you nowhere encountered my Gabriel's boat  
on the bayous?”

Over Evangeline's face at the words of Basil a shade  
passed.

Tears came into her eyes, and she said, with a tremulous  
accent,—

“Gone? is Gabriel gone?” and, concealing her face on  
his shoulder,

All her o'erburdened heart gave way and she wept and  
lamented.

Then the good Basil said,—and his voice grew blithe as  
he said it,—

“Be of good cheer, my child; it is only to-day he departed.  
Foolish boy! he has left me alone with my herds and my  
horses.

## EVANGELINE

---

Moody and restless grown, and, tried and troubled, his  
spirit

Could no longer endure the calm of this quiet existence.  
Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and sorrowful ever,  
Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and his troubles,  
He at length had become so tedious to men and to  
maidens,

Tedious even to me, that at length I bethought me, and  
sent him

Unto the town of Adayes to trade for mules with the  
Spaniards.

Thence he will follow the Indian trails to the Ozark  
Mountains,

Hunting for furs in the forests, on rivers trapping the  
beaver.

Therefore be of good cheer; we will follow the fugitive  
lover;

He is not far on his way, and the Fates and the streams  
are against him.

Up and away to-morrow, and through the red dew of the  
morning

We will follow him fast, and bring him back to his  
prison."

## EVANGELINE

---

Then glad voices were heard, and up from the banks  
of the river,  
Borne aloft on his comrades' arms, came Michael, the  
fiddler.  
Long under Basil's roof had he lived like a god on Olym-  
pus,  
Having no other care than dispensing music to mortals.  
Far renowned was he for his silver locks and his fiddle.  
"Long live Michael," they cried, "our brave Acadian  
minstrel!"  
As they bore him aloft in triumphal procession; and  
straightway  
Father Felician advanced with Evangeline, greeting the  
old man  
Kindly and oft, and recalling the past, while Basil, en-  
raptured,  
Hailed with hilarious joy his old companions and gos-  
sips,  
Laughing loud and long, and embracing mothers and  
daughters.  
Much they marveled to see the wealth of the ci-devant  
blacksmith,



## EVANGELINE

---

All his domains and his herds, and his patriarchal demeanor;  
Much they marveled to hear his tales of the soil and the climate,  
And of the prairies, whose numberless herds were his who would take them;  
Each one thought in his heart, that he, too, would go and do likewise.  
Thus they ascended the steps, and, crossing the airy veranda,  
Entered the hall of the house, where already the supper of Basil  
Waited his return; and they rested and feasted together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden darkness descended.  
All was silent without, and, illuming the landscape with silver,  
Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad stars; but within doors,  
Brighter than these, shone the faces of friends in the glimmering lamplight.  
Then from his station aloft, at the head of the table, the herdsman



## EVANGELINE

---

Poured forth his heart and his wine together in endless  
profusion.

Lighting his pipe, that was filled with sweet Natchitoches  
tobacco,

Thus he spake to his guests, who listened, and smiled as  
they listened:—

“Welcome once more, my friends, who so long have been  
friendless and homeless,

Welcome once more to a home, that is better perchance  
than the old one!

Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like the riv-  
ers;

Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the farmer;  
Smoothly the plowshare runs through the soil as a keel  
through the water.

All the year round the orange-groves are in blossom; and  
grass grows

More in a single night than a whole Canadian summer.

Here, too, numberless herds run wild and unclaimed in  
the prairies;

Here, too, lands may be had for the asking, and forests  
of timber

## EVANGELINE

---

With a few blows of the ax are hewn and framed into  
houses.

After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow  
with harvests,

No King George of England shall drive you away from  
your homesteads,

Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your  
farms and your cattle."

Speaking these words, he blew a wrathful cloud from his  
nostrils,

And his huge, brawny hand came thundering down on  
the table,

So that the guests all started; and Father Felician, aston-  
ished,

Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff half-way to his  
nostrils.

But the brave Basil resumed, and his words were milder  
and gayer:—

"Only beware of the fever, my friends, beware of the  
fever!

For it is not like that of our cold Acadian climate,  
Cured by wearing a spider hung around one's neck in a  
nutshell!"

## EVANGELINE

---

Then there were voices heard at the door, and footsteps  
approaching

Sounded upon the stairs and floor of the breezy veranda.  
It was the neighboring Creoles and small Acadian  
planters,

Who had been summoned all to the house of Basil, the  
Herdsman.

Merry the meeting was of ancient comrades and neigh-  
bors:

Friend clasped friend in his arms; and they who before  
were as strangers,

Meeting in exile, became straightway as friends to each  
other,

Drawn by the gentle bond of a common country together.  
But in the neighboring hall a strain of music, proceeding  
From the accordant strings of Michael's melodious fiddle,  
Broke up all further speech. Away, like children de-  
lighted,

All things forgotten beside, they gave themselves to the  
maddening

Whirl of the dizzy dance, as it swept and swayed to the  
music,

## EVANGELINE

---

Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the rush of fluttering garments.

Meanwhile, apart, at the head of the hall, the priest  
and the herdsman  
Sat, conversing together of past and present and future;  
While Evangeline stood like one entranced, for within  
her  
Olden memories rose, and loud in the midst of the music  
Heard she the sound of the sea, and an irrepressible sadness  
Came o'er her heart, and unseen she stole forth into the  
garden.  
Beautiful was the night. Behind the black wall of the  
forest,  
Tipping its summit with silver, arose the moon. On the  
river  
Fell here and there through the branches a tremulous  
gleam of the moonlight,  
Like the sweet thoughts of love on a darkened and devious spirit.  
Nearer and round about her, the manifold flowers of the  
garden

## EVANGELINE

---

Poured out their souls in odors, that were their prayers  
and confessions

Unto the night, as it went its way, like a silent Carthusian.

Fuller of fragrance than they, and as heavy with shadows  
and night-dews,

Hung the heart of the maiden. The calm and the magical  
moonlight

Seemed to inundate her soul with indefinable longings,  
As, through the garden gate, beneath the brown shade  
of the oak-trees,

Passed she along the path to the edge of the measureless  
prairie.

Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon it, and fire-flies  
Gleaming and floating away in mingled and infinite numbers.

Over her head the stars, the thoughts of God in the heavens,

Shone on the eyes of man, who had ceased to marvel and  
worship,

Save when a blazing comet was seen on the walls of that  
temple,

## EVANGELINE

---

As if a hand had appeared and written upon them,  
    "Upharsin."

And the soul of the maiden, between the stars and the  
    fire-flies,

Wandered alone, and she cried,—“O Gabriel! O my  
    beloved!

Art thou so near unto me, and yet I cannot behold thee?  
Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy voice does not  
    reach me?

Ah! how often thy feet have trod this path to the prairie!  
Ah! how often thine eyes have looked on the woodlands  
    around me!

Ah! how often beneath this oak, returning from labor,  
Thou hast lain down to rest, and to dream of me in thy  
    slumbers.

When shall these eyes behold, these arms be folded  
    about thee?”

Loud and sudden and near the note of a whippoorwill  
    sounded

Like a flute in the woods; and anon, through the neigh-  
    boring thickets,

Farther and farther away it floated and dropped into  
    silence.



## EVANGELINE

---

“Patience!” whispered the oaks from oracular caverns of  
darkness;  
And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh responded, “To-  
morrow!”

Bright rose the sun next day; and all the flowers of the  
garden  
Bathed his shining feet with their tears, and anointed  
his tresses  
With the delicious balm that they bore in their vases of  
crystal.  
“Farewell!” said the priest, as he stood at the shadowy  
threshold;  
“See that you bring us the Prodigal Son from his fasting  
and famine,  
And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept when the bride-  
groom was coming.”  
“Farewell!” answered the maiden, and, smiling, with  
Basil descended  
Down to the river’s brink, where the boatmen already  
were waiting,  
Thus beginning their journey with morning, and sun-  
shine, and gladness,

## EVANGELINE

---

Swiftly they followed the flight of him who was speeding before them,

Blown by the blast of fate like a dead leaf over the desert.

Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the day that succeeded,

Found they trace of his course, in lake or forest or river,  
Nor, after many days, had they found him; but vague and uncertain

Rumors alone were their guides through a wild and desolate country;

Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town of Adayes,  
Weary and worn, they alighted, and learned from the garrulous landlord

That on the day before, with horses and guides and companions,

Gabriel left the village, and took the road to the prairies.

#### IV

Far in the West there lies a desert land, where the  
mountains  
Lift, through perpetual snows, their lofty and luminous  
summits.  
Down from their jagged, deep ravines, where the gorge,  
like a gateway,  
Opens a passage rude to the wheels of the emigrant's  
wagon,  
Westward the Oregon flows and the Walleway and  
Owyhee.  
Eastward, with devious course, among the Wind-river  
Mountains,  
Through the Sweet-water Valley precipitate leaps the  
Nebraska;  
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout and the Span-  
ish sierras,  
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept by the wind  
of the desert,

## EVANGELINE

---

Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound, descend to  
the ocean,  
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud and solemn vibrations.  
Spreading between these streams are the wondrous,  
beautiful prairies,  
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and sunshine,  
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple amorphas.  
Over them wander the buffalo herds, and the elk and the roebuck;  
Over them wander the wolves, and herds of riderless horses;  
Fires that blast and blight, and winds that are weary with travel;  
Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ishmael's children,  
Staining the desert with blood; and above their terrible war-trails  
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the vulture,  
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaughtered in battle,

## EVANGELINE

---

By invisible stairs ascending and scaling the heavens.  
Here and there rise smokes from the camps of these savage marauders;  
Here and there rise groves from the margins of swift-running rivers;  
And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk of the desert,  
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for roots by the brookside,  
And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline heaven,  
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.

Into this wonderful land, at the base of the Ozark Mountains,  
Gabriel far had entered, with hunters and trappers behind him.  
Day after day, with their Indian guides, the maiden and Basil  
Followed his flying steps, and thought each day to o'er-take him.  
Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw, the smoke of his camp-fire

## EVANGELINE

---

Rise in the morning air from the distant plain; but at  
nightfall,

When they had reached the place, they found only  
embers and ashes.

And, though their hearts were sad at times and their bod-  
ies were weary,

Hope still guided them on, as the magic Fata Morgana  
Showed them her lakes of light, that retreated and van-  
ished before them.

Once, as they sat by their evening fire, there silently  
entered  
Into the little camp an Indian woman, whose features  
Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience as great as her  
sorrow.

She was a Shawnee woman returning home to her people,  
From the far-off hunting-grounds of the cruel Co-  
manches,

Where her Canadian husband, a Coureur-des-Bois, had  
been murdered.

Touched were their hearts at her story, and warmest and  
friendliest welcome



## EVANGELINE

---

Gave they, with words of cheer, and she sat and feasted  
among them  
On the buffalo-meat and the venison cooked on the  
embers,  
But when their meal was done, and Basil and all his  
companions,  
Worn with the long day's march, and the chase of the  
deer and the bison,  
Stretched themselves on the ground, and slept where the  
quivering firelight  
Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and their forms wrapped  
up in their blankets,  
Then at the door of Evangeline's tent she sat and  
repeated  
Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the charm of her Indian  
accent,  
All the tale of her love, with its pleasures, and pains,  
and reverses.  
Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and to know that  
another  
Hapless heart like her own had loved and had been dis-  
appointed.

## EVANGELINE

---

Moved to the depths of her soul by pity and woman's  
    compassion,  
Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who had suffered was  
    near her,  
She in turn related her love and all its disasters.  
Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat, and when she had  
    ended  
Still was mute; but at length, as if a mysterious horror  
Passed through her brain, she spake, and repeated the  
    tale of the Mowis;  
Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who won and wedded  
    a maiden,  
But, when the morning came, arose and passed from the  
    wigwam,  
Fading and melting away and dissolving into the sun-  
    shine,  
Till she beheld him no more, though she followed far into  
    the forest.  
Then, in those sweet, low tones, that seemed like a weird  
    incantation,  
Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau, who was wooed by a  
    phantom,

## EVANGELINE

---

That, through the pines o'er her father's lodge, in the  
hush of the twilight,  
Breathed like the evening wind, and whispered love to  
the maiden,  
Till she followed his green and waving plume through  
the forest,  
And never more returned, nor was seen again by her  
people.  
Silent with wonder and strange surprise, Evangeline  
listened  
To the soft flow of her magical words, till the region  
around her  
Seemed like enchanted ground, and her swarthy guest  
the enchantress.  
Slowly over the tops of the Ozark Mountains, the moon  
rose,  
Lighting the little tent, and with a mysterious splendor  
Touching the somber leaves, and embracing and filling  
the woodland.  
With a delicious sound the brook rushed by, and the  
branches  
Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely audible whis-  
pers.

## EVANGELINE

---

Filled with the thoughts of love was Evangeline's heart,  
but a secret,  
Subtle sense crept in of pain and indefinite terror,  
As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into the nest of the  
swallow.  
It was no earthly fear. A breath from the region of  
spirits  
Seemed to float in the air of night; and she felt for a  
moment  
That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was pursuing a  
phantom.  
And with this thought she slept, and the fear and the  
phantom had vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march was resumed; and  
the Shawnee  
Said, as they journeyed along,—“On the western slope  
of these mountains  
Dwells in his little village the Black Robe chief of the  
Mission.  
Much he teaches the people, and tells them of Mary  
and Jesus;



"SILENT WITH WONDER AND STRANGE SURPRISE EVANGELINE LISTENED"

—Page 239





## EVANGELINE

---

Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and weep with pain,  
as they hear him."

Then, with a sudden and secret emotion, Evangeline  
answered,—

"Let us go to the Mission, for there good tidings await  
us!"

Thither they turned their steeds; and behind a spur of  
the mountains,

Just as the sun went down, they heard a murmur of  
voices,

And in a meadow green and broad, by the bank of a  
river,

Saw the tents of the Christians, the tents of the Jesuit  
Mission.

Under a towering oak, that stood in the midst of the  
village,

Knelt the Black Robe chief with his children. A cru-  
cifix fastened

High on the trunk of the tree, and overshadowed by  
grape-vines,

Looked with its agonized face on the multitude kneeling  
beneath it.

## EVANGELINE

---

This was their rural chapel. Aloft, through the intricate arches

Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of their vespers,  
Mingling its notes with the soft susurrus and sighs of the branches.

Silent, with heads uncovered, the travelers, nearer approaching,

Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined in the evening devotions.

But when the service was done, and the benediction had fallen

Forth from the hands of the priest, like seed from the hands of the sower,

Slowly the reverend man advanced to the strangers, and bade them

Welcome; and when they replied, he smiled with benignant expression

Hearing the homelike sounds of his mother-tongue in the forest,

And with words of kindness conducted them into his wigwam.

There upon mats and skins they reposed, and on cakes of the maize-ear

## EVANGELINE

---

Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the water-gourd  
of the teacher.

Soon was their story told; and the priest with solemnity  
answered:—

“Not six suns have risen and set since Gabriel, seated  
On this mat by my side, where now the maiden reposes,  
Told me this same sad tale; then arose and continued  
his journey!”

Soft was the voice of the priest, and he spake with an  
accent of kindness;

But on Evangeline’s heart fell his words as in winter  
the snow-flakes

Fall into some lone nest from which the birds have  
departed.

“Far to the north he has gone,” continued the priest;  
“but in autumn,

When the chase is done, will return again to the Mis-  
sion.”

Then Evangeline said, and her voice was meek and sub-  
missive,—

“Let me remain with thee, for my soul is sad and  
afflicted.”

## EVANGELINE

---

So seemed it wise and well unto all; and betimes on the  
morrow,  
Mounting his Mexican steed, with his Indian guides and  
companions,  
Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline stayed at  
the Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded each  
other,—  
Days and weeks and months; and the fields of maize  
that were springing  
Green from the ground when a stranger she came, now  
waving above her,  
Lifted their slender shafts, with leaves interlacing, and  
forming  
Cloisters for mendicant crows and granaries pillaged by  
squirrels.  
Then in the golden weather the maize was husked, and  
the maidens  
Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that betokened a  
lover,  
But at the crooked laughed, and called it a thief in the  
cornfield.

## EVANGELINE

---

Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline brought not her  
lover.

“Patience!” the priest would say; “have faith, and thy  
prayer will be answered!

Look at this delicate plant that lifts its head from the  
meadow,

See how its leaves all point to the north, as true as the  
magnet;

It is the compass-flower, that the finger of God has sus-  
pended

Here on its fragile stalk, to direct the traveler’s  
journey

Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless waste of the desert.  
Such in the soul of man is faith. The blossoms of pas-  
sion,

Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter and fuller of  
fragrance,

But they beguile us, and lead us astray, and their odor  
is deadly.

Only this humble plant can guide us here, and hereafter  
Crown us with asphodel flowers, that are wet with the  
dews of nepenthe.”

## EVANGELINE

---

So came the autumn, and passed, and the winter,—  
yet Gabriel came not;  
Blossomed the opening spring and the notes of the robin  
and bluebird  
Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood, yet Gabriel  
came not.  
But on the breath of the summer winds a rumor was  
wafted  
Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or odor of blossom.  
Far to the north and east, it said, in the Michigan for-  
ests,  
Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of the Saginaw river.  
And, with returning guides, that sought the lakes of  
St. Lawrence  
Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went from the Mis-  
sion.  
When over weary ways, by long and perilous marches,  
She had attained at length the depths of the Michigan  
forests,  
Found she the hunter's lodge deserted and fallen to ruin!

Thus did the long sad years glide on, and in seasons  
and places



## EVANGELINE

---

Divers and distant far was seen the wandering  
maiden;—

Now in the tents of grace of the meek Moravian Mis-  
sions,

Now in the noisy camps and the battlefields of the army,  
Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and populous cities.  
Like a phantom she came, and passed away unremem-  
bered.

Fair was she and young, when in hope began the long  
journey;

Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended.  
Each succeeding year stole something away from her  
beauty,

Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom and  
the shadow.

Then there appeared and spread faint streaks of gray  
o'er her forehead,

Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her earthly hori-  
zon,

As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the morn-  
ing.

V

In that delightful land which is washed by the Delaware waters,  
Guarding in sylvan shades the name of Penn the Apostle,  
Stands on the banks of its beautiful stream the city he founded.  
There all the air is balm, and the peach is the emblem of beauty,  
And the streets still reëcho the names of the trees of the forest,  
As if they fain would appease the Dryads whose haunts they molested.  
There from the troubled sea had Evangeline landed, an exile,  
Finding among the children of Penn a home and a country.  
There old René Leblanc had died; and when he departed,  
Saw at his side only one of all his hundred descendants.  
Something at least there was in the friendly streets of the city,

## EVANGELINE

---

Something that spake to her heart, and made her no  
longer a stranger;

And her ear was pleased with the Thee and Thou of the  
Quakers,

For it recalled the past, the old Acadian country,  
Where all men were equal, and all were brothers and  
sisters.

So, when the fruitless search, the disappointed endeavor,  
Ended, to recommence no more upon earth, uncomplaining,

Thither, as leaves to the light, were turned her thoughts  
and her footsteps.

As from a mountain's top the rainy mists of the morning  
Roll away, and afar we behold the landscape below us,  
Sun-illuminated, with shining rivers and cities and ham-  
lets,

So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the world  
far below her,

Dark no longer, but all illumined with love; and the  
pathway

Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth and fair in  
the distance.

## EVANGELINE

---

Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her heart was his  
image,

Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as last she  
beheld him,

Only more beautiful made by his deathlike silence and  
absence.

Into her thoughts of him time entered not, for it was not.  
Over him years had no power; he was not changed, but  
transfigured;

He had become to her heart as one who is dead, and not  
absent;

Patience and abnegation of self, and devotion to others,  
This was the lesson a life of trial and sorrow had taught  
her.

So was her love diffused, but, like to some odorous spices,  
Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling the air with  
aroma.

Other hope had she none, nor wish in life, but to follow  
Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred feet of her  
Saviour.

Thus many years she lived as a Sister of Mercy; fre-  
quenting





"THUS MANY YEARS SHE LIVED AS A SISTER OF MERCY"—Page 250





## EVANGELINE

---

Lonely and wretched roofs in the crowded lanes of the  
city,

Where distress and want concealed themselves from the  
sunlight,

Where disease and sorrow in garrets languished neglected.

Night after night, when the world was asleep, as the  
watchman repeated

Loud, through the gusty streets, that all was well in the  
city,

High at some lonely window he saw the light of her  
taper.

Day after day, in the gray of the dawn, as slow through  
the suburbs

Plodded the German farmer, with flowers and fruits for  
the market,

Met he that meek, pale face, returning home from its  
watchings.

Then it came to pass that a pestilence fell on the city,  
Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly by flocks of wild  
pigeons,

## EVANGELINE

---

Darkening the sun in their flight, with naught in their  
craws but an acorn.

And, as the tides of the sea arise in the month of Sep-  
tember,

Flooding some silver stream, till it spreads to a lake in  
the meadow,

So death flooded life, and, o'erflowing its natural mar-  
gin,

Spread to a brackish lake, the silver stream of existence.  
Wealth had no power to bribe, nor beauty to charm, the  
oppressor;

But all perished alike beneath the scourge of his anger;—  
Only, alas! the poor, who had neither friends nor attend-  
ants,

Crept away to die in the almshouse, home of the home-  
less.

Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst of meadows  
and woodlands;—

Now the city surrounds it; but still, with its gateway  
and wicket

Meek, in the midst of splendor, its humble walls seem to  
echo

## EVANGELINE

---

Softly the words of the Lord:—"The poor ye always  
have with you."

Thither, by night and by day, came the Sister of Mercy.  
The dying

Looked up into her face, and thought, indeed, to behold  
there

Gleams of celestial light encircle her forehead with  
splendor,

Such as the artist paints o'er the brows of saints and  
apostles,

Or such as hangs by night o'er a city seen at a distance.

Unto their eyes it seemed the lamps of the city celestial,

Into whose shining gates ere long their spirits would  
enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through the streets, deserted  
and silent,

Wending her quiet way, she entered the door of the alms-  
house.

Sweet on the summer air was the odor of flowers in the  
garden;

And she paused on her way to gather the fairest among  
them,

## EVANGELINE

---

That the dying once more might rejoice in their fragrance and beauty.

Then, as she mounted the stairs to the corridors, cooled  
by the east wind,

Distant and soft on her ear fell the chimes from the belfry of Christ Church,

While, intermingled with these, across the meadows were  
wafted

Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the Swedes in the  
church at Wicaco.

Soft as descending wings fell the calm of the hour on her  
spirit;

Something within her said,—“At length thy trials are  
ended”;

And, with light in her looks, she entered the chambers of  
sickness.

Noiselessly moved about the assiduous, careful attendants,

Moistening the feverish lip, and the aching brow, and  
in silence

Closing the sightless eyes of the dead, and concealing  
their faces,

## EVANGELINE

---

Where on their pallets they lay, like drifts of snow by  
the roadside.

Many a languid head, upraised as Evangeline entered,  
Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while she passed,  
for her presence

Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun on the walls of  
a prison.

And, as she looked around, she saw how Death, the con-  
soler,

Laying his hand upon many a heart, had healed it for-  
ever.

Many familiar forms had disappeared in the night-time;  
Vacant their places were, or filled already by strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling of won-  
der,

Still she stood, with her colorless lips apart, while a  
shudder

Ran through her frame, and forgotten, the flowerets  
dropped from her fingers,

And from her eyes and cheeks the light and bloom of the  
morning.

## EVANGELINE

---

Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible  
anguish,

That the dying heard it, and started up from their pil-  
lows.

On the pallet before her was stretched the form of an old  
man.

Long, and thin, and gray were the locks that shaded his  
temples;

But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for a moment  
Seemed to assume once more the forms of its earlier man-  
hood;

So are wont to be changed the faces of those who are  
dying.

Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of the  
fever,

As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had besprinkled  
its portals,

That the Angel of Death might see the sign, and pass  
over.

Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit  
exhausted

Seemed to be sinking down through infinite depths in  
the darkness,



## EVANGELINE

---

Darkness of slumber and death, forever sinking and sinking.

Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied reverberations,

Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush that succeeded

Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender and saint-like,

“Gabriel! O my beloved!” and died away in silence.

Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the home of his childhood;

Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers among them,  
Village, and mountain, and woodlands; and, walking  
under their shadow,

As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in his vision.

Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly he lifted his eyelids,

Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline knelt by his bedside.

Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the accents unuttered

Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what his tongue would have spoken.

## EVANGELINE

---

Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline, kneeling beside  
him,  
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her bosom.  
Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it suddenly sank into  
darkness,  
As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind at a case-  
ment.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the  
sorrow,  
All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,  
All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of  
patience!  
And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head to her  
bosom,  
Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured, "Father, I  
thank thee!"

---

Still stands the forest primeval; but far away from its  
shadow,  
Side by side, in their nameless graves, the lovers are  
sleeping.

## EVANGELINE

---

Under the humble walls of the little Catholic church-  
yard,

In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown and unnoticed.  
Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flowing beside them,  
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where theirs are at rest  
and forever,

Thousands of aching brains, where theirs no longer are  
busy,

Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs have ceased  
from their labors,

Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have completed  
their journey!

Still stands the forest primeval; but under the shade of  
its branches

Dwells another race, with other customs and language.  
Only along the shores of the mournful and misty Atlantic  
Linger a few Acadian peasants whose fathers from exile  
Wandered back to their native land to die in its bosom.  
In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the loom are still  
busy;

Maidens still wear their Norman caps and their kirtles  
of homespun,

## EVANGELINE

---

And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline's story,  
While from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced, neighbor-  
ing ocean  
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of  
the forest.

THE END

















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